

Jordan Times

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Tunisian women trickle into rare centre

TUNIS (AP) — An abused women's centre in Tunis, one of the only such facilities in the male-dominated Arab World, has welcomed a trickle of about 120 women since opening in 1990. The independent Tunisian Association of Democratic Women reported Tuesday that 36 women who have sought counselling at the centre have won court cases and damages from men who abused them. The figures may not seem impressive but are remarkable in Arab society. "This violence is spreading in an alarming fashion in Tunisia and takes the forms of physical and verbal aggression and sexual harassment at work," said Souad Oun, the centre's coordinator. She refused to comment on the causes of the violence. Tunisia, a relatively liberal country, has for years granted women legal equality with men, divorce and abortion rights. The association carried out a survey two years ago at Tunis hospitals, discovering that victims ranged from seven to 67 years and were usually beaten by their husbands, fathers or brothers. Beatings occurred among all levels of society, usually at night. Sexual harassment at work was also reported. The centre provides abused women with legal counselling and nursing care. The association eventually hopes to build a shelter for battered women based on those in Western countries.

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Decree approves new press law

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal decree was issued Tuesday approving the 1993 Press and Publication Law. The law was recently approved by the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament.

Libya urges boycott of Security Council

TUNIS (R) — An official Libyan paper called Tuesday on "all countries" to boycott United Nations Security Council resolutions, saying the world body had lost credibility. Al-Jamahiria newspaper said Israel was allowed to ignore the United Nations and the Security Council therefore had no right to impose its rulings. The Libyan newspaper issued the call a few days before the Security Council reviews sanctions imposed on Libya last year. "Small nations are called upon to announce that they do not care about previous and upcoming Security Council resolutions," Al-Jamahiria said according to a report by the official news agency JANA. "Israel... announces each day it does not respect the council nor its resolutions nor charters... yes, the Security Council has lost its credibility in the face of such recklessness, and therefore there is no justification for (the council) to impose its resolutions," the newspaper said.

Police arrest 40 after Cairo protest

CAIRO (R) — Egyptian police arrested about 40 young Muslim militants Tuesday after they tried to organise a protest march from Cairo University to the nearby Israeli embassy, security sources said. The protest happened on the day when a court began the retrial of the militants' spiritual leader, Omar Abdul Rahman (see page 5) and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was due to meet U.S. President Bill Clinton in Washington. The sources said police arrested the militants in the early morning before they reached the university campus, where they had planned to gather students and march to the embassy to burn an Israeli flag. Police seized two home-made bombs, a revolver and several knives from those detained.

Emir invites Clinton to visit Kuwait

KUWAIT (R) — The emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, has invited U.S. President Bill Clinton to visit the emirate, the Kuwaiti News Agency said Tuesday. It quoted sources at the Kuwaiti embassy in Washington as saying the emir stressed in his invitation his country's deep appreciation to the United States for leading the Gulf war in 1991 that ended Iraq's seven-month occupation of Kuwait.

Sheikh Ali rejects resignation call

KUWAIT (AP) — Defence Minister Sheikh Ali Al Sabah said Tuesday he had rejected a demand by parliament deputies for resignations of military officers who failed to defend Kuwait against Iraq's August 1990 invasion. The deputies wanted the resignations as a condition for approving 3.5 billion dinars (\$12.25 billion) in military spending over the next decade. Sheikh Ali said he refused this condition but asked senior officers to retire to allow for "new blood" in the military. The Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah, called on the deputies in Tuesday's parliament session not to criticise the military without knowing all the facts and to restrict such discussions to a closed session.

U.S. marine guilty in Somalia trial

MOGADISHU (R) — A military court martial found a U.S. Marine guilty Tuesday of aggravated assault for wounding two Somalis after a youth stole his sunglasses. The court martial hearing, held in a sweltering tent in Mogadishu, stripped the marine, Harry Conde, of his rank of gunnery sergeant and docked his pay for one month. "I came to Somalia to restore hope, but what hope do I have," a tearful Conde, from Puerto Rico, told reporters afterwards.

Israeli soldiers kill West Bank shepherd

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli soldiers shot and killed a Palestinian youth in a chase in the occupied West Bank Tuesday, military officials said. The dead Palestinian was named as Janan Mohammad Suleiman Hazul, 24, from the town of Kabatyeh.

The officials said he was shot near Kabatyeh when he fled after being challenged by an army patrol. The army was investigating the incident, they said.

A soldier shot and seriously wounded a second Palestinian man who stabbed and lightly wounded him in another incident in the West Bank, military officials and Palestinians said.

They said the soldier was stabbed in the neck from behind while on guard outside the employment office in the town of Nablus. He shot his attacker and wounded him seriously, they said.

Both men were taken to hospital for treatment.

Palestinian sources said the army made house-to-house searches in the Deir Al Balah refugee camp in the occupied Gaza Strip.

They said soldiers destroyed furniture in homes, forced Palestinians to clean pro-Palestinian graffiti off walls and beat about 18 Palestinians during the searches.

Palestinian reports said the victim was a shepherd tending his goats outside Kabatyeh. Army officials said the man appeared "suspicious" to the patrol, but did not explain. Army officials said the victim was not wanted.

In the West Bank town of Nablus, a Palestinian stabbed an Israeli soldier outside an office where Arabs register for jobs in Israel, the army said. The soldier, who was lightly hurt, shot and seriously wounded his assailant.

The motive for the stabbing was not clear.

The employment office was open despite a ban on Palestinians entering Israel that has kept 110,000 Palestinian labourers from their jobs since last Wednesday.

Last week, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin indefinitely sealed the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip — barring the two million Palestinians from entering Israel — after a series of attacks on Israelis.

The restrictions are being eased to supply labourers to Israeli farmers and building contractors who depend on cheap Arab labour.

In recent days, the military government in the occupied territories issued entry permits to 1,400 Palestinian farm workers, and Israel Radio said Tuesday the

agriculture ministry was pushing the government to let another 4,000 workers into Israel. Some building workers would also be given permits, the report said. "The Rabin government wants to reduce sharply the number of Palestinians employed in Israel, arguing it would improve 'security' and make Israel less dependent on Palestinian labour."

At a special cabinet meeting scheduled for Sunday, the government is to decide on additional steps to reduce the Palestinian labour force once the closure is lifted.

Proposals include barring private cars with West Bank and Gaza licence plates from entering Israel and reducing the number of crossroads between the occupied territories and Israel.

Housing Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer said Monday that Israel would have to rely on its own labour force when the government and the Palestinians eventually reach agreement on "self-rule" for the occupied territories.

Mr. Ben-Eliezer and the Israeli contractors association agreed Monday to train 10,000 Israelis in building jobs now and 30,000 over the next three years.

Two soldiers see different in Gaza, page 5

PLO rejects Israeli demand to halt revolt

AMMAN (Agencies) — Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) official said Tuesday Palestinians would never accept an Israeli demand to halt their six-year revolt while the Jewish state occupied their land.

Abdul Rahim Mallooh, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee, told Reuters the request was put to the Palestinians as part of possible confidence-building gestures to help revive Middle East peace talks.

It was relayed during a meeting in Washington last month between Palestinian leader Faisal Al Hussein and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

"Israel is demanding an end to violence against them, and with the word violence they mean the Palestinian intifada," Mr. Mallooh told Reuters.

"The Palestinian side rejects this demand... the (uprising) is a form of legitimate struggle as long as the occupation exists."

Mr. Mallooh was speaking a day after the Unified Leadership of the Uprising in the occupied territories, aligned with the main PLO faction Fatah, urged Arabs to inflict painful blows on Israelis.

Palestinians killed 13 Israelis in March, the highest monthly toll in nearly four years. In response, Israel last week closed indefinitely the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The 17-month-old peace talks

were suspended after Israel expelled 415 Palestinians to South Lebanon on Dec. 17. The expulsions sparked further violence.

The Palestinians demand the return of the expellees and an Israeli pledge of no more expulsions or human rights abuses before they agree to attend a ninth round of peace talks due to start in Washington on April 20.

The PLO leadership ended a four-day meeting without deciding on Palestinian participation in the next round of peace talks.

A member of the Palestinian delegation to the talks, Ghassan Al Khatib, reiterated that American assurances were "insufficient."

The decision on whether to take part in the next round of talks is expected to be made after a meeting in mid-April in Amman of Arab states concerned in the process, the AP said.

Mr. Khatib expressed hope that President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt would make headway in pleading the Palestinians' case during talks Tuesday with President Bill Clinton.

He hoped Mr. Mubarak would "convince the American administration of the need to dissipate Palestinian fears."

Mr. Khatib was part of the delegation who met last month with Mr. Christopher.

Hekmatyar warns rivals to accept new government

CHARASAYAB (AP) — Rebel leaders must accept a new Islamic government in Afghanistan or face more bloodshed, prime Minister-designate Gulbuddin Hekmatyar has warned.

Last week, Mr. Hekmatyar dismissed the cabinet formed by the nine rebel factions in April 1992 to replace the ousted communist rulers and said he had picked a new one.

But President Burhanuddin Rabbani immediately reversed the order and said the cabinet would stay on until he had approved another.

The dispute deepened the tensions among former rebel leaders struggling for control in the Afghan capital of Kabul following 13 years of civil war against the Soviet-backed government.

At least 5,000 people have been killed and more than 20,000 others wounded in fighting that began with the overthrow of the former communist regime. Mr. Hekmatyar's radical Hezb-e-Islami faction was blamed for most of the bloodshed.

Speaking to reporters at his base 20 kilometres south of Kabul, Mr. Hekmatyar referred to Mr. Rabbani's government as

"the other side."

Mr. Hekmatyar argued the president had overstepped his authority spelled out in a peace and power-sharing pact signed last month. He said rebel negotiators had agreed that two cabinet positions would go to each faction.

But the other rebel chiefs said Mr. Hekmatyar had picked the new cabinet without talking to them. Mr. Hekmatyar has been accused of giving the most powerful portfolios in his new cabinet to his closest allies.

On March 7, the rebel leaders signed a pact in Pakistan and in the Holy City of Mecca to stop fighting, share power and accept Mr. Hekmatyar as prime minister.

But it was unclear how the agreement would be implemented and whether it offered a permanent settlement to the rebels' long-standing differences.

"Some people are deliberately trying to violate this accord so that it gradually loses its significance and becomes irrelevant," Mr. Hekmatyar said.

He warned the new government may be the last chance for a peaceful settlement in Afghanistan.

Exiles see no solution to their plight

MARJ AL ZOHOOR, Lebanon (R) — Palestinian expellees said Tuesday President Hosni Mubarak's effort to resolve the crisis over their expulsion with U.S. President Bill Clinton would fail because Washington was biased towards Israel.

The Egyptian leader was holding talks with Mr. Clinton Tuesday to discuss ways to resume Arab-Israeli peace talks stalled since Israel expelled 415 Palestinians to South Lebanon in December.

"We trust President Hosni Mubarak is seeking a solution to the deportees' issue so that Arab delegates would be able to go to the negotiating table," said Abdul Aziz Al Rantisi, leader of the remaining 396 exiles.

"But I am confident that America provides Israel with unlimited support... therefore I can't see that there would be any (positive) response from America," he told reporters at the exiles' tent camp.

Dr. Rantisi said he expected the Arab parties to boycott the peace talks because of Washington's pro-Israeli stand but hoped the Arabs would not surprise the expellees by showing up for the negotiations.

He said the exiled men would reject any phased return and insisted on returning home collectively.

Nabil Shaath, a senior Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) official, said Monday Mr. Mubarak would propose a three-point return of the expellees, which he said was an Egyptian idea for a compromise between Palestinian and Israeli positions.

The Palestinians refuse to attend the peace talks unless the United States and Israel agree to a package of assurances and confidence-building measures, including a promise that there will be no further expulsions.

Israel offered in February to take back 101 exiles immediately and the rest by the end of the year.

The exiles rejected the U.S.-brokered offer, insisting on the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 799, which stipulates that Israel take back the men immediately.

Dr. Rantisi, a founder of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, complained that a stream near the camp, the exiles' main source of water, was about to dry up.

He said that if water dried up and there was no political solution to their ordeal, the exiles would march to Israeli lines and try to force their way back to their homes "at any cost."

King and Queen leave for Britain

AMMAN (J.T.) — Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor left Amman for the United Kingdom Tuesday.

The King and the Queen were seen off at the airport by His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Their Highnesses Prince Faisal and Prince Ghazi and

(Continued on page 5)



Clinton says U.S. 'full partner' in peace talks

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — President Bill Clinton, hoping to win Arab support for renewed Middle East peace talks, met Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak Tuesday to offer assurances of a balanced U.S. approach to defusing the region's problems.

Mr. Clinton, during a joint news conference at the White House with the Egyptian leader, offered to be a "full partner" in renewed peace talks.

"I am convinced that we share a common vision of a more peaceful Middle East," Mr. Clinton said.

"This is a critical period for the Middle East," Mr. Clinton said. "Our historic mission is to make this a year of peace."

Mr. Clinton and Mr. Mubarak met reporters following private talks about the prospects for working out a U.S. invitation for the peace talks to resume on April 20 in Washington.

"We believe Egypt and the

United States have a crucial role to play to all the peace negotiations to reach a successful conclusion" of the talks, Mr. Mubarak said.

Mr. Clinton, in response to a question from reporters, voiced optimism that "there is reason to believe we can make real headway."

Mr. Mubarak agreed, saying he had talked with numerous leaders in the Middle East and was convinced "all of them want to reach peace as soon as possible."

U.S. officials said privately that Mr. Clinton wanted to use his first meeting with an Arab leader to stress that he intends to be even-handed in his approach to the peace talks.

Various Arab diplomats have expressed fears that the approach followed by former President

(Continued on page 5)

Mubarak meets Christopher, page 2



A woman rummages through rubbish for food or anything worth selling on one of Moscow's waste disposal sites (AFP photo)

Yeltsin gears up for hustings; opponents sneer at summit aid

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin geared up for a gruelling referendum campaign Tuesday as political foes sneered at his weekend summit with U.S. leader Bill Clinton.

Mr. Yeltsin, 62, returned late Monday from western Canada, a tiring trip half way around the world, stopping off in the Siberian city of Bratsk for a brief spell on the hustings.

He gave a hint of the tactics he will use for the April 25 referendum, which he hopes will end a crippling struggle for power with the more conservative Russian parliament.

Mr. Yeltsin told crowds in Bratsk to vote "Yes" to all four questions — including one calling for early presidential elections — apparently keen to simplify the choice for voters.

Aides have said the president will spend the 18 days to polling day trekking back and forth across this giant country drumming up support for his market reforms and his leadership.

Mr. Yeltsin says there is at present no alternative to himself to lead the country of 150 million people. Mr. Clinton, standing beside him at their Vancouver news conference, also said Mr. Yeltsin "embodied" democratic values and promised continued support.

But a spokesman for Mr. Yeltsin's main domestic rival, Parliament Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov, said Tuesday the parliament was doing much to promote reform.

"The personification by the U.S. administration and the West as a whole of the democratic changes in Russia in one single man can hardly be positive for the political situation in Russia and in the world as well," spokesman Konstantin Zlobin told Reuters.

He belittled the promise of \$1.6 billion in U.S. aid which Mr. Yeltsin had brought back with him.

"For this huge country, it is insignificant," Mr. Zlobin said. "I believe the 10 best baseball, tennis and basketball players in the United States get more in a year."

Communist and nationalist newspapers also poured scorn on the amount in the first comment on the summit — there are no Russian daily newspapers Monday.

"Ten dollars per Russian soul," the former Communist Party daily Pravda headlined its report, adding that this was less than the price of a bottle of whisky.

It also compared this amount

Mediator seeks halt to Palestinian feud

AMMAN (R) — A Muslim cleric trying to mediate a blood feud between the Palestinian mainstream Fatah movement in Lebanon and a splinter group led by Abu Nidal called Tuesday for a six-month truce to pave the way for reconciliation talks. Fatah, which is led by Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat, declared open war Monday on Abu Nidal's Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC) after more than a year of tit-for-tat assassinations in Lebanon. "I proposed to the Fatah Revolutionary Council a halt to the massacres to pave the way for an atmosphere of reconciliation," said Sheikh Assad Baynoud Al Tamimi, head of the Islamic Jihad — Bai Al Maqdes. "And they (the FRC) agreed to debate it among themselves," he told Reuters in an interview. He said that after months of mediation, he was supposed to chair a reconciliation meeting planned for an undisclosed Arab capital after the end of the Holy Month of Ramadan. But renewed tensions between the two sides torpedoed the talks. Sheikh Tamimi has close personal links with Mr. Arafat, who endorsed his efforts. "Now, I want to secure the agreement of the Abu Nidal faction before taking the next step (and contacting Arafat)," he said.

'Soviets entered Afghanistan to block Iran'

OSLO (R) — The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979 to prevent Iran's revolutionary fervour from spreading rather than extend Soviet influence during the cold war, a Norwegian historian said Tuesday.

Odd Arne Westad, director of research at the Nobel Institute in Oslo, said he had been allowed access to long-secret Soviet archives which showed the Soviet embassy and KGB representatives in Kabul had opposed the invasion.

"We've talked of the invasion very often in cold war terms, of U.S.-Soviet rivalry... this seems to play a very, very limited role," he told Reuters. "The main Soviet worry was Iran."

The Nobel Institute, which oversees the annual peace prize, has advised Moscow on declassifying archives to help scholars. The peace prize was awarded in 1991 to former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Mr. Westad said his research, so far unpublished, was partly based on documents from the International Department of the Soviet Communist Party — ranging from diplomatic cables to reports prepared for the politburo.

He said the Kremlin, concerned about the spread of Islamic fundamentalism, saw Afghanistan as a buffer state and as a listening post for spying on neighbouring Iran around the time of the 1979 revolution led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The invasion, ordered by Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, was intended to fend off Iran but had the effect of intensifying the cold war in the early 1980s.

Babrak Karmal was installed as Afghan president in the Soviet invasion. His predecessor, Hafizullah Amin, was regarded as less reliable by Moscow and was executed.

The Soviet Union, which had more than 100,000 troops in Afghanistan by 1987, withdrew fully in February 1989 after an occupation during which at least 13,000 Soviet soldiers died.

Mubarak confers with Christopher, other U.S. officials

WASHINGTON (USA) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak Monday began a series of meetings with key members of the Clinton administration.

He had a meeting and working luncheon with Secretary of State Warren Christopher, met with the secretaries of commerce and agriculture and with Senate Majority leader George Mitchell.

The Egyptian president was scheduled to meet with President Bill Clinton Tuesday.

There was no press briefing following Mr. Mubarak's discussions with Mr. Christopher, but prior to their meeting State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said that U.S. officials would discuss the Middle East peace process with the Egyptian leader.

The spokesman pointed out that the United States and Egypt have been supporting the peace process. Egypt is the only Arab country to have concluded a peace treaty with Israel.

Mr. Boucher said the United States continues to be confident that the parties will return to direct Arab-Israeli peace talks on April 20 in Washington.

"We continue to have discussions with the various parties about the (Palestinian) deportees issue and the other questions," he said, adding the United States continues to stress the importance of returning to the negotiation table on April 20.

He said Mr. Christopher and Mr. Clinton would bring Mr. Mubarak up-to-date on U.S. discussions with the Palestinians, who were in Washington late last month. The Egyptian leader also will be briefed on U.S. contacts with the other parties to the Arab-Israeli peace process and on "some of the more specific issues that are being discussed," Mr. Boucher said.

"I think the Egyptian government has made clear that it believes it's important for the parties to attend the peace talks on April 20," he said.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Mubarak had separate meeting with Senator Mitchell, Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy and Commerce Secretary Ron Brown.

Mr. Espy, in remarks to journalists following his meeting said "the discussion centred upon the trade relationship between our two countries."

"Egypt is a very important market for our agricultural commodities, and the United States is very interested in maintaining a very productive relationship," Mr. Espy said.

Mr. Espy said they discussed agricultural trade issues and the export enhancement programme.

"I assured the president we would be continuing — in fact, even increasing — the relationship between our two nations," Mr. Espy said.

Mr. Brown, characterising his meeting with the Egyptian leader as "a reunion between two old friends," said he had the opportunity to spend "a good deal of time" with President Mubarak when he accompanied President Clinton to Cairo about a year and a half ago.

Mr. Brown said he indicated to Mr. Mubarak that the U.S. "is eager to enhance trade and to try to help him increase American business investment in Egypt."

"We have a good and cordial and close relationship, and I look forward, on behalf of the Clinton administration, to work closely with the president and his administration and the private sector in Egypt," Mr. Brown said.

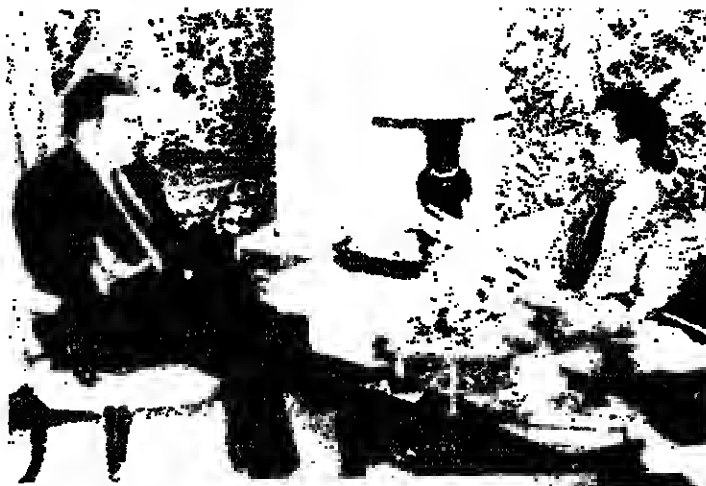
In response to questions, Mr. Brown said they also discussed opening the American market to the Egyptian products. "I promised him I would take a look at specific markets he mentioned," Mr. Brown added, noting again, "it was a very cordial meeting."

Later in the day, the Egyptian leader met with International Monetary Fund Managing Director Michel Camdessus.

Mr. Camdessus told reporters after his meeting that he congratulated President Mubarak for Egypt's "extraordinary achievements" in economic reforms. He said he saw "only very positive changes" following his visit to Cairo two years ago.

"For me, it was a great pleasure to tell the president that I am delighted to see that the programme has delivered more than expected, but of course, the programme remains immense, the challenges for the countries (of the region) are big."

"We coincided in saying that now we have to take advantage of



Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak (left) Monday meets with U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown (AFP photo)

all that has been started, to create more growth in the country and more investment, and this has to come from the private sector, basically," he said. "And we agree in saying that the priorities now are indeed for maintaining a good, stable, macroeconomic framework, while allowing the enterprises for investment, for creating more jobs opportunities."

Mr. Camdessus said the IMF and Egypt are discussing new programmes for the next three years. "I am quite optimistic about having an agreement in place within the next three months," he said.

"If needed, we will be there for that," he said in response to a question about further assistance. "And we will continue supporting the efforts of Egypt in all the fields, especially in its negotiations with the rest of the international community."

Following his White House meeting and working luncheon Tuesday with President Clinton, President Mubarak was to confer with Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen and Defence Secretary Les Aspin.

Mr. Boucher told questioners there was continuing cooperation between Egypt and the United States on counterterrorism issues, but Egypt has not passed on any specific information concerning planned acts of terrorism in the United States.

His comments were prompted by news reports that claimed Mr. Mubarak suggested the World Trade Centre explosion could have been prevented if the United States had followed up on information provided by Egypt.

"As you know, there are restrictions on how much we can say in particular about the World Trade Centre," the spokesman

Aid 'assured'

The U.S. intends to maintain its foreign aid levels to Egypt, Senate leaders assured Mr. Mubarak Sunday.

Sen. Patrick Leahy, chairman of the defence appropriations sub-committee, told Mr. Mubarak that he would work to influence the White House's foreign assistance package, including the \$2 billion in annual aid to Egypt.

"We have had very strong commitments to Egypt, and we have reiterated those commitments to Egypt, and I don't think anyone wants to do anything to disrupt that economy," Mr. Leahy told reporters after his 90-minute meeting with Mr. Mubarak.

Senate Republican leader Robert Dole, who met later with Mubarak, said he told Mr. Mubarak that "we ought to continue Egypt's aid at its present level."

Dole reported that Mr. Mubarak had indicated that U.S. aid "hasn't increased, but inflation has."

Mahdi released after one-day questioning

CAIRO (Agencies) — Sudan's former Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi was released after authorities detained him for a day for alleged involvement in anti-government activities.

The official Sudan News Agency (SUNA) said security forces freed Al-Mahdi after interrogating him on his "political activities hostile to the Sudanese government."

The former premier's arrest was reported by his supporters in London. The Umma Party, which he leads, said in a statement that soldiers arrested Al Mahdi, his aides and some of his guests at his home in Omdurman.

It said the soldiers took the group to security headquarters in Khartoum for interrogation. They later released the aides, the Umma statement said. The only guest it identified was Abdul Rasul Al Nour, the former governor of Kordofan.

The party said Mr. Mahdi was arrested for his vocal criticism of the practices of Omar Hassan Al Bashir's Islamic fundamentalist policies, referring to articles and speeches he has made recently.

Lieutenant-General Bashir's military junta toppled Mr. Mahdi's democratically-elected government on June 30, 1990 and banned political parties and other civilian organisations.

Mr. Mahdi's Umma Party is forming a front with other Sudanese political organisations in exile to oppose Gen. Bashir's government.

Mr. Mahdi, born in 1935, is the Oxford-educated grandson of the man who led a messianic Islamic revolt against Egyptian-British rule of Sudan in the 19th century. He was prime minister from 1966-67 and from 1985-89.

The Ashraq Al Awsat newspaper published in London said Mr. Mahdi's attacks in newspaper articles and a sermon at prayers marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan two weeks ago angered the government, which is dominated by Islamic fundamentalists led by Mr. Mahdi's brother-in-law Hassan



Sadeq Al Mahdi

Turabi

Al Hayat said Gen. Bashir accused Mr. Mahdi in a speech last Friday of having made concessions to rebels in southern Sudan and slowing up introduction of Islamic law in the country.

Sudan backs Libyan plan

Sudan Tuesday praised Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi's plan to impose stricter Islamic rules in his country.

The Transitional National Assembly or parliament issued a statement describing Colonel Qadhafi's decision as "a positive step towards unity."

Col. Qadhafi, who has implemented a watered down version of Islamic law in Libya, last week unveiled a plan to impose stricter rules like amputating thieves' hands and flogging adulterers on television.

Gen. Bashir reintroduced Islamic law a few months after he came to power in June 1989.

The two neighbouring countries have signed an "integration agreement" providing for close coordination to lead eventually to unity.

Gen. Bashir met with Col. Qadhafi in Libya a week ago to discuss pushing the unity plan forward.

Former policeman suspected of spying for Israel, ADL

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Tom Gerard was a San Francisco police officer, and by most accounts a good one.

But investigators now believe he went beyond the call of duty: A "spy" who gleaned police and motor vehicle files for possible sale to foreign governments, including Israel and South Africa.

The investigation of Mr. Gerard has led authorities to several other cities in the West.

Mr. Gerard, a 25-year police department veteran, can't be questioned. He moved to the Philippines after he retired last November, and the United States has no extradition treaty with that country.

The investigation is focused on a suspected lead of San Francisco police computer files, but information in 12,000 files seized from Mr. Gerard and local art dealer Roy Bullock led to possible computer breaches of police departments in Portland, Los Angeles and other cities, said San Francisco District Attorney Arlo Smith.

The seized files contain personal information on people with a range of political and ethnic affiliations, including Arab-Americans, Irish-Americans, neo-Nazis, skinheads, and blacks supporting Nelson Mandela, Mr. Smith said.

Investigators think Mr. Bullock, 58, sent the information overseas, said Assistant District Attorney John Dwyer.

Mr. Dwyer wouldn't confirm published reports suggesting information was sold to Israel and South Africa, but did say investi-

gators were checking an alleged link between the files and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL).

Mr. Gerard, 50, and Mr. Bullock have ties to the organisation, investigators said.

"The ADL trades information with police. But there's a limit on what the police are allowed to trade, and there's a limit on what the ADL is allowed to ask, and both have crossed that limit," Mr. Dwyer said.

Investigators believe Mr. Gerard accessed state Department of Motor Vehicle information and criminal records and shared the data with Mr. Bullock, who Mr. Smith was employed by the ADL.

Mr. Gerard couldn't be located for comment, Mr. Bullock has insisted he has done nothing wrong.

The activity of Mr. Bullock and Mr. Gerard, and their ties to the ADL, is probably duplicated by others with ties to police departments in other cities, Mr. Dwyer said. But he said he isn't aware of similar investigations.

The sale of information to foreign governments would violate federal laws, but the U.S. attorney's office wouldn't say if it was investigating.

The ADL, which has cooperated with the investigation, denies being involved in purchasing information from police departments or its sale to foreign governments. "I should add, we never authorised anyone to do so on our behalf," said Barbara Wahl, an ADL attorney, who wouldn't confirm whether Mr. Bullock worked for the organisation.

Turkey under fire over human rights

WASHINGTON (AP) — Human rights activists who charged that abuses in Turkey are worsening were accused Monday by a Turkish government spokesman and others of minimising great progress and applying Western standards.

"The human rights situation in Turkey is truly appalling," said Helsinki Watch, urging a cutoff of American aid.

Despite reforms announced by Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel's 14-month-old government, "there has been a marked decline in the human rights situation," Amnesty International asserted.

"Turkey has compressed into mere decades a democratisation process that, in the West, spanned at least two centuries," countered Turkish embassy First Secretary Namik Tan in an unusual debate on Capitol Hill.

The audience, including representatives of Turkish-Americans and Turkey's Kurdish minority, were invited to join the confrontation in a congressional hearing room.

The session was called by the U.S. Helsinki Commission, a bipartisan group that monitors human rights in all 53 countries of the conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Monday was Turkey's turn.

"It is the height of conceit to judge other nations by standards we (U.S.) were able to achieve only in the post-World War II era," said Heath Lowry, a professor at Georgetown University. Dr. Lowry, who said he does not represent the Turkish government.

Turkey and all other countries must fulfil the obligations of international humanitarian treaties they have subscribed to, said Mary Sue Hafner, the commission's general counsel. "The problem appears to be one of political will," she added.

Maryam Elahi, an attorney for Amnesty International, said Turkish political killings rose from 50 in 1991 to more than 300 in 1992, with little or no effort to prosecute those responsible. Promised reforms included no safeguards for political prisoners, and a new law appears to be "an empty gesture mainly intended to serve public relations purposes" at home and abroad, she said.

Harun Kazaz, chief of the assembly of Turkish American associations, told Ms. Elahi, "We find your organisation extremely anti-Turkish...Amnesty's stand certainly does not make it easy for anybody to sit down and try to work out issues."

"We are not anti-Turkish or

...anti-any government," Ms. Elahi said, adding that amnesty would welcome investigation of all its allegations.

Mr. Tan restated the official Turkish position against negotiations with KPP, the separatist rebel Kurdish Labour Party (PKK). He pressed President Naimdin O. Karim of the Kurdish National Congress of North America to concede that the PKK is a terrorist organisation with a Marxist-Leninist agenda.

Mr. Karim replied that "the Kurdish people of Turkey do not want anything to do with violence."

"We want Turkey to progress to prosperity for all its people," he said.

Turkey is wrongfully accused of torture in some cases, Mr. Lowry said, because the Turkish word "iskence" means not only torture but also police brutality, which exists in many countries.

Demirel's appeal

Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel Monday urged Kurdish rebels to end a nine-year independence struggle and surrender to Turkish authorities, state television reported.

"They (the rebels) must realise that 8,000 to 10,000 men hiding in the mountains armed with a few automatic weapons will get no

where," Mr. Demirel told reporters after meeting Iraqi Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani in Ankara.

"We urge them to turn themselves over to the refuge of Turkey's justice system," Mr. Demirel said.

Abdullah Ocalan, leader of the PKK, ordered a March 20-April 15 ceasefire which has brought a fall in violence in Turkey's predominantly Kurdish southeast.

The ceasefire offer was relayed to Turkey by Mr. Talabani, who told reporters he planned to go to Damascus to see Mr. Ocalan again but gave no date.

The PKK's independence fight in southeast Turkey has killed more than 5,500 people since 1984. Turkey has welcomed the ceasefire but says it will not negotiate with the PKK.

Mr. Demirel and Mr. Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, reviewed the situation in northern Iraq and discussed the security of Turkey's border with Iraq.

Mr. Demirel said Turkey would do its utmost to relieve the plight of three million Iraqi Kurds suffering under an Iraqi economic embargo.

Turkish forces and Iraqi Kurdish guerrillas fought forces last November to flush out PKK rebels from mountain hideouts in northern Iraq.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 7411-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Envy Special
18:30 News in French
19:15 French Varieties
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Chance in a Million
21:00 Spotlight
21:30 Documentary
22:00 News in English
22:20 Mini-series

PRAYER TIMES

04:54 Fajr
06:12 (Sunrise) Dhuh
12:30 Dhuh
16:12 Asr
19:03 Maghreb
20:22 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swiffield, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 626543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 711331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 712501

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 717151

Armenian International Church Tel. 625226

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 823824, 624932

Church of the Nazareth Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

A drop in temperatures will take place and clouds will appear at various altitudes, making it partly cloudy. Winds will be westerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min/Max. temp.
Amman 71/18
Aqaba 17/23
Dahlat 6/20
Jerusalem 10/21

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 23, Aqaba 25. Humidity readings:

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Bahjat Bader 849362
Dr. Hisham Kanaani 790286
Dr. Ghazi Abu Sheikha 752405
Dr. Adnan Al Zoughoul 898140
Fires pharmacy 661912
Pardows pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 637025
Nairokh pharmacy 629672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shimacani pharmacy 637660
Nairokh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 947632

IRBID:
Dr. Amin Abu Eids 661101
Dr. Asim pharmacy 661101

ZARQA:
Dr. Ibrahim Al Hindi 661101
Khalifeh pharmacy 980417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 62111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 773121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 894398
Public Security Department 630221
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 674155
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 513413/2
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Al-Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 642411/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642262
Malinas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmiciani 664171/4
Shmiciani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 891511/5
Al-Musahid Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic Abdali 666177/7
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/6
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 777111/26
Army, Shmiciani 891511/5
Queen Alia Hospital 662240/50
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)983360
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Beulah Hospital (02)255555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)722225
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Rajp Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:00 Aden (RJ)
06:45 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:45 London, Berlin (RJ)
11:35 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
12:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:40 Istanbul (RJ)
16:30 Colombo (RJ)
16:35 Athens, Cairo (RJ)
17:45 Riyadh (RJ)
18:25 New Delhi (RJ)
18:30 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
19:15 Brussels, Paris (RJ)
19:18 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
19:18 Toronto, Montreal (RJ)
19:18 London, Brussels (RJ)
19:40 Rome (RJ)

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Yemeni vice-president visits Muscat

SANAA (R) — Yemen's Vice-President Ali Salem Al Baidh left for Oman Tuesday, becoming the most senior Yemeni official to visit the neighbouring Gulf state since they settled a 25-year-old border dispute six months ago. Diplomats said the visit would result in signing agreements to cooperate in developing the border area including the construction of a road link. Yemen's Reconstruction Minister Abdullah Hussein Al Khursbuni has been in Muscat since Saturday to finalise the accord. Since last October's states improved considerably after they signed last October's border agreement. A delegation from Oman's Chamber of Commerce and Industry visited Yemen in January and signed an agreement to establish a maritime line and build a \$12 million hotel in Taiz province and several joint private-sector industrial projects. Omani oil firm Sa'ad Al Qawi was granted a concession to explore oil in the Mukalla-Sayhut region shortly after the border demarcation agreement was signed.

Spokesman denies Assad ailing

DAMASCUS (AP) — Syria Monday strongly denied reports that President Hafez Al Assad was in poor health. "Such fabricated and false reports, which have no foundation whatsoever, are not worth comment," presidential spokesman Jubran Kourieh said. Reports that Mr. Assad, 63, is ailing have been circulating since Christmas. The latest was published this week by Britain's Sunday Telegraph, which said Syria was heading towards a succession struggle because of the president's poor health. The report, Mr. Kourieh said, was "part of a renewed hostile campaign against Syria and its role in achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace" in the Middle East. "The president's health is good," the spokesman stressed, and listed a number of public functions in which Mr. Assad was involved to prove the inaccuracy. Last week, Mr. Assad was in Cairo, where he met with President Hosni Mubarak. On Thursday, he received the Vatican's foreign minister, Jean-Louis Tawrin.

First shipload of pilgrims arrived in Saudi Arabia

JEDDAH (AP) — The first shipload of Muslim pilgrims docked at Jeddah port Monday, inaugurating the annual season of Hajj. The Saudi Press Agency said the pilgrims were Indians, who had sailed from Bombay. It did not give their number. Some two million Muslim converge on the kingdom each year for pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. This year's rituals climax at the end of May.

Egypt militants pinpoint ministers' houses

ISMAILIA, Egypt (R) — Egyptian police arrested four Muslim militants Monday for handing out leaflets urging people to attack the holiday homes of cabinet ministers along the Suez Canal, state prosecutor Ahmad Al Shihawi said. Mr. Shihawi said in a statement the four, students from the village of Fayad about 35 kilometres south of Ismailia, were arrested distributing about 2,000 leaflets among villagers urging them to attack the houses of Prime Minister Atef Sedki and other ministers. It was the first time the Suez Canal zone has figured in militant activity since a surge of violence which has killed about 120 people began in March last year. Mr. Shihawi said the four, students at Ismailia's Suez Canal University, were detained for 15 days pending investigation. Information Minister Safwat Al Sherif, Planning Minister Kamal Ganzouri, Housing Minister Hassaballah Kafrawi, Cabinet Affairs Minister Atef Obeid, and Electricity Minister Maher Abaza are among top officials with holiday homes on a stretch of the canal near Fayad known as "Ministers' Cove". Police launched a bloody series of raids last month to crush the militants who are fighting to set up a purist Islamic state. Militants have fought back with a wave of bomb attacks.

Mubarak to meet Mitterrand, Balladur on Thursday

PARIS (R) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak will meet French President Francois Mitterrand and Prime Minister Edouard Balladur during a two-day visit to Paris this week, the offices of the president and premier said Monday. Mr. Mubarak, who began a visit to the United States Monday, will meet Mr. Balladur Thursday morning and then lunch with Mr. Mitterrand. Mr. Mubarak will be in Paris Wednesday and Thursday on his way back to Cairo from the United States, French diplomatic officials said.

Britain to help Kurds fight cereal pest

LONDON (R) — The British government said Monday it was offering financial and technical assistance to help Iraqi Kurds fight a cereal crop bug called the sunne pest. The Overseas Development Administration (ODA) said its £1.3 million (\$2 million) contribution would provide a package of measures to help the Kurds maximise their food production, including protecting cereals against the sunne bug. If the bug is left untreated much of the harvest would be destroyed causing a serious shortage of food, the ODA said. Also included are animal vaccination, fertilisers and seed for the spring vegetable planting season, the ODA said, adding that the project would be managed by a British charity, the Save the Children Fund, which already operates in northern Iraq.

Mahathir leaves Iran after trade deals

NICOSIA (R) — Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mahathir Mohamad left Tehran Tuesday after negotiating deals to boost trade with Iran to \$200 million annually. Tehran Radio said, Mr. Mahathir flew to Qeshm Island, a free trade zone in the Hormuz Strait which Iran is building up as a centre for foreign investment, at the end of a four-day official visit, the Iranian news agency (IRNA) said in a separate report. He told reporters that Malaysia would buy steel, copper, gold, marble and decorative stones from Iran, the radio said. Malaysian firms had agreed to buy a liquid gas plant in Iran and cooperate in hotel building and other tourist industry projects, he said. "Under eight agreements signed in Tehran, trade exchanges are expected to top \$200 million," the radio quoted Mr. Mahathir as saying. IRNA quoted him as saying the agreements also covered oil, telecommunications, mining and health care but gave no details. Vice-President Hassan Habibi, seeing off Mr. Mahathir, said Iran proposed the formation of an Islamic international tourist agency to the Malaysians, the radio said. Mr. Mahathir, the most senior Malaysian official to visit Iran since Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, held talks with supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani during his stay.

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:45 Damascus (RJ)
07:45 Beirut (ME)
07:45 Rome (A2)
09:15 Damascus (PJ)
09:30 Cairo (CV)
11:20 Sanaa (YV)
11:30 Jeddah (SU)
20:45 Karachi (ST)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:00 Aqaba (RJ)
10:30 London, Berlin (RJ)
11:35 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
12:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:40 Istanbul (RJ)
16:30 Colombo (RJ)
16:35 Athens, Cairo (RJ)
17:45 Riyadh (RJ)
18:25 New Delhi (RJ)
18:30 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
19:15 Brussels, Paris (RJ)
19:18 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
19:18 Toronto, Montreal (RJ)
19:18 London, Brussels (RJ)
19:40 Rome (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 700/700
Banana 680/680
Banana (Mukammur) 620/620
Beans 900/700
Cabbage 90/60
Carrot 180/120
Cauliflower 160/100
Cucumbers (large) 120/60
Cucumbers (small) 220/160
Eggplant 340/260
Garlic 500/400
Grapefruit 240/180
Lemon (large) 400/300
Lemon (small) 200/150

Home News

Queen meets with officials attending population meeting

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Tuesday received at Nadwa Palace Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) Nafis Sadiq and reviewed with her projects and programmes funded by the UNFPA in Jordan and the region.

Her Majesty also discussed with Dr. Sadiq the Regional Population Conference which is currently being held in Amman. Attending Dr. Sadiq's audience with the Queen were Chief of the Division for Arab States and Europe at UNFPA Ali Ugur Tunger, UNDP representative in Jordan, Osman Hashim, UNFPA's senior programme officer in Jordan Dirwas Alkhas.

Later, Queen Noor received the Population Institute in Washington D.C. Douglas Keare, chief of

the Population and Human Resources Division for the Middle East and North Africa Region at the World Bank.

Both sides discussed with Her Majesty possibilities of cooperation with Jordan and available assistance opportunities to help the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) extend its development projects to Jordan and its expertise to countries in the region.

Earlier Tuesday, Dr. Sadiq and the accompanying delegation visited Noor Al Hussein Foundation and were briefed by its president, director general and other senior staff of its integrated and comprehensive approach to development and on the positive

results of the UNFPA-funded Women in Development Project which NHF launched in 1987 to help low-income, middle-aged women participate more actively in Jordan's economic growth and national development.

The United Nations official also examined selected items produced by Jordanian women benefiting from the Women in Development Project.

Products include garments, light shoes and slippers, medicinal herbs, condiments, and honey.

Dr. Sadiq and the accompanying delegation then toured the NHF Design and Trade Centre, an offshoot of NHF's National Handicrafts Development Project which is extending technical training and marketing assistance to over 2,000 Jordanian crafts men and women across Jordan.

Report on Arab women's status receives labour ministers' support

AMMAN (Petra) — Arab labour ministers who Tuesday addressed the second day of their conference supported a report submitted by the Arab Labour Organisation (ALO) director on women in the Arab World.

"We have studied with deep interest the ALO director's report concerning the status of women, their contributions to socio-economic development and research related to this subject, and we fully support measures that can enable Arab women to participate effectively in all development efforts," said Egypt's Minister of Manpower and Training Assem Abdul Haq.

The ALO is clearly oriented towards deepening the concept of working women in the Arab World and this labour conference ought to emphasise this issue, the Egyptian minister said.

Expressing his country's support for the promotion of

women's roles, Sudan's Minister of Labour Dominic Casiano said Sudan was backing the ALO's endeavours to "highlight the role of women, who, he said constitute an essential element in development."

What is needed now, he added, is to help women engage effectively in socio-political life.

The Sudanese minister urged the Arab World and the U.N. Security Council to lift the sanctions imposed on Libya and Iraq and voiced his country's solidarity with the people of Bosnia Herzegovina.

Qatari Minister of Labour Abdul Rahman Ben Saad Al Dirhem said in an address, that while the Arab World is approaching the 21st century, it continues to grapple with numerous problems in social and economic fields.

Developing human resources — male and female — continues

to be one of the main concerns of Qatar in the struggle to attain sustainable development, the minister said.

Bahrain's Minister of Labour and Social Development Khalifa Ben Salman Al Khalifa outlined his country's endeavours to develop human resources with particular attention to women.

A general population census conducted in Bahrain in 1991 showed that females constituted 49 per cent of the population and recent statistics proved that 26 per cent of the total workforce in Bahrain is female, Sheikh Khalifa explained.

He said his country supported the ALO director's report about future programmes designed to promote the role of women.

Jordan's delegate Khaled Shreim, who is also secretary general of the Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions, backed the ALO report, but stressed

the importance of the section on tackling the problem of unemployment in the Arab World.

Mr. Shreim said that at present nine million Arab workers are unemployed, adding that the situation calls for Arab labour agreements and ALO programmes.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Tuesday received separately in his office the ministers of labour of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar and Bahrain who are attending the Arab Labour ministers conference in Amman.

Sheikh Seif Jarwan, the UAE minister, conveyed to the prime minister greetings from Sheikh Maktoum Ben Rashid Al Maktoum, the UAE vice president and the prime minister of the UAE.

He said his country was eager to bolster ties with Jordan. The prime minister welcomed

Sheikh Jarwan and asked him to convey his own greetings to the UAE leaders.

Abdul Rahman Ben Saad Al Dirhem, the Qatari minister, told Sharif Zeid that his country appreciated his Majesty King Hussein's national stands and Jordan's serious endeavours to unify Arab ranks and bolster inter-Arab relations in ever-changing fields in light of the current challenges facing the Arab Nation.

Sharif Zeid said Jordan was aiming to reconcile Arab ranks for higher national interests.

Sheikh Khalifa Ben Salman Al Khalifa, the Bahraini minister, voiced his country's appreciation of Jordan's efforts in rebuilding Arab solidarity.

Sharif Zeid expressed hope that the meeting of the Arab labour ministers in Amman would open a new chapter that would serve Arab causes.



Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Tuesday visits Control and Inspection Bureau Director Mohammad Thuneibat

Sharif Zeid visits control and inspection bureau

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Tuesday visited the Control and Inspection Bureau (CIB) which monitors the performance of various government departments. Addressing a meeting attended by Bureau Director Mohammad Thuneibat and other officials, the prime minister called on the CIB to investigate various details pertaining to administrative issues in order to ensure the soundness of the information related to or given about government departments.

He also urged Dr. Thuneibat to speed up procedures for the ac-

quisition of a computer system to store information about government affairs.

Sharif Zeid asked that the bureau recruit qualified officials, adding that courses should also be conducted to provide on-the-job training for veteran employees.

The prime minister was assured that procedures were being conducted along the lines of his own directives issued earlier this year. Dr. Thuneibat also briefed the prime minister on a working plan and research work underway, as well as a guidebook for various ministries and government departments.

He also said the bureau was organising its works through four different sectors: financial and economy; education; transport and services; and agricultural health and development.

At the moment, the bureau is developing an integrated data base in order to compile detailed information about each ministry and government office to assist decision-makers and facilitate the work of government departments, said Dr. Thuneibat.

In November 1992, the prime minister announced a wide-ranging administrative reform programme creating the Control and Inspection Bureau.

Seminar focuses on women in industries

AMMAN (Petra) — The employment of women in the industries of the Arab World is the title of a three-day seminar which was opened in Amman Tuesday under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath.

Organisers said the discussions will cover the role of women in these industries, political implications of women's engagements in industry, resultant occupational and family problems, the role of women in electronic industries, and vocational training for Arab women.

Arab women have been mostly restricted to working in education and nursing professions, but the modern age and modern industry

required women's engagement in other advanced fields as well, said the Princess in a message read on her behalf by Princess Wijdan Ali at the opening session.

Developing manpower that includes men as well as women, is essential if the Arab World is to embark on modern industry and reduce its dependence on major industrialised nations, the Princess said.

The meeting is organised by the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils, the General Federation of Arab Women, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the Higher Council for Science and Technology in Jordan.

Israel seeks West's recognition of Jerusalem as capital by year 2000

By Sausan Ghoshieh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — "Israel is pushing to have Jerusalem recognised by the West as its capital either by 1998 or 2000, marking the 50th anniversary of the creation of the state of Israel and the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Christ respectively," said Michael Dumper, honorary research fellow at the University of Exeter, in Britain, to an audience at the Jerusalem Forum recently.

Dr. Dumper, who obtained his doctorate in "Muslim institutions and the Israeli state," has focused his study primarily on Israeli settlement in the old city of Jerusalem.

Since 1967, he said, "Israeli settlement policy in Jerusalem has been directed towards a single overriding goal: The consolidation of Israeli control over Palestinian East Jerusalem in order to prevent any future division of the city."

Politically, Dr. Dumper said, this involved Israel declaring a united Jerusalem as its "eternal" capital.

Demographically, that meant the settlements of Israelis in the Palestinian part of the city, he maintained.

Israeli settlements in the old city have taken place in four different phases, Dr. Dumper explained.

He said the first phase began immediately after the occupation of the city, which involved the demolition of an entire quarter in the old city, the Maghreb quarter.

"During the second phase, from 1968 to the late seventies, the Israeli government expanded the Jewish quarter by expropriating Palestinian and Islamic properties between the Armenian and Maghreb quarters, evicting the Palestinian tenants and replacing them with Israelis," he stated.

The third phase, Dr. Dumper added, began in the early eighties when militant Israeli settlers aimed to establish an Israeli presence in the heart of the Muslim quarter, near Al Aqsa Mosque, and succeeded.

Dr. Dumper said the fourth phase began in 1987, when Ariel Sharon, then the Israeli housing minister, seized property in the Muslim quarter, thus giving overt government support to the settler activities.

With the advent of the Intifada, the rate of Israeli acquisition in the old city decreased, Dr. Dumper said.

The settlers still own the areas they confiscated, but the majority of the settlers do not live in them, he added.

They are "feeling under siege," Dr. Dumper maintained.

In addition, the high cost of protection and the lack of jobs in the old city has made it expensive for settlers to live there, Dr. Dumper explained.

During the Likud government, Dr. Dumper stated that the Society for the Renewal of Jewish Settlement Throughout the Old City (Atara Tyoshma) received significant funds from the Israeli Ministry of Housing, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and from Jewish-Americans.

The Israeli long-term development pattern in East Jerusalem, according to Dr. Dumper, is to "build a belt" around the city and to isolate it from the surrounding Arabs.

But, he mentioned two adverse developments to the plans of the Israeli authorities.

First, he said the Jewish population is not increasing at a high rate. The increase in the number of Israeli Jews in East Jerusalem is due to "a population shift and not to population growth," he explained.

The second development, Dr. Dumper stated, is the "projection" of a population shift to the west after the establishment of the future commercial centre west of Jerusalem.

Dr. Dumper also spoke of a plan by the Israeli authorities to establish a central business district in one of the main streets of East Jerusalem, Salah El Din Street.

Activists disapprove biased human rights implementation

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Experts on human rights voiced their dissatisfaction Tuesday over biased implementation of human rights standards as stipulated by international laws and agreements, and discussed ways to counter these actions.

In the morning session of the second day Roundtable on Human Rights held at the InterContinental Hotel, lecturers stressed the importance of moving from rhetoric to action and ways of combating selectivity and ready-made models imposed on poor countries, which are inconsistent with their norms, traditions, culture and religion.

"We need objectivity to remedy injustice," said Ben Turok, director of the Institute of African Alternatives.

But, "we have to identify those who gain at the expense of others since we cannot pursue the goal of objectivity without cost," Dr. Turok emphasised.

In presenting an overall view of the situation in South Africa, Dr. Turok revealed the extent of partiality and double standards that led to the current state of deterioration and human rights violations in the country.

"Lives of people are at stake,

and still we have no hand in shaping a better future for us," he said, pointing out that if the choice was left to the people themselves, they would not opt for the same model that is imposed on them.

The pursuit of objectivity, according to Dr. Turok, is crucial since models imposed are clearly based on economic standards and not on humanitarian ones.

The outlet to this situation will be, to many countries, the introduction of changes at all levels; which, Dr. Turok believes, includes self-critiquing ideas at the economic, social and cultural levels and examining the practices of institutions at an international level.

Both these routes go hand in hand with an advancement of the mechanisms of non-governmental organisations to establish and promote objectivity, Dr. Turok added.

Rosemarie Kuptana, president of Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, who also voiced her disapproval over the double standards used in the implementation of human rights, raised the question of minorities and the right to self-determination.

"We reject being labelled as minorities or vulnerable people,"

she said. "We are not inferior and we are not primitive, and we will not accept that other people decide for us, especially when it comes from those who colonise us."

Other lecturers, however, criticised some countries' delays in ratification of international law and treaties on human rights.

A Jordanian lecturer, Awan Khasawneh, an expert to U.N. Sub-commission on Human Rights, said the democratic nature of international law is at the core of the countries' procrastination in implementing human rights codes.

"The fact that the countries have the choice to accept it (ratification of international law) is not a hindrance to its application," Mr. Al Khasawneh said.

Recommendations of the three-day round-table, which expected to end today, would focus mainly on the universality of human rights and the vit importance of universal respect for existing standards and norms as well as the promotion of positive approach to human rights which reflects the humanitarian values of the world diverse faith and cultures and their contribution to the protection of human worth and dignity.

Group alleges Western subversion in Third World population policies

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Standing on the sidelines at the Arab Population Conference in Amman is a small, yet steadfast, minority opposed to the population control policies being discussed.

While some of the views of these participants are shaped by theological beliefs, others in attendance warn of Western conspiracies.

Alleging subversion by the West, Elizabeth Sobo of the Washington D.C.-based Information Project for Africa (IPFA) charges that population growth in the Third World combined with a decline in the West has military and political leaders concerned.

According to documents distributed by IPFA, the North believes that if current trends continue, political and economic power will eventually shift to the South resulting in the decline of today's industrial giants.

The basis for this purported activity is to keep the population of less developed countries (LDCs) within a certain range in order to assure Western access to the "strategic and critical minerals and resources" present in the Third World, according to Ms. Sobo.

IPFA links Western concern of reversing the decline of their own population in order to perpetuate economic and military superiority to the programmes aimed at reducing the population of potential Third World powers.

In a sharp attack against Abdel Rahman Omran, one of the participants at the conference, the IPFA claimed that he worked as an agent for Western interests in Nigeria to offset their population growth.

In an IPFA document entitled "The Nigeria Deception," Dr. Omran is said to have played a major role in establishing a misinformation campaign in Nigeria where he worked as a consultant to the Ministry of Health.

Manipulation of Islamic texts in a booklet entitled "A Resource Manual on Islam & Family Plan-

ning With Special Reference to the Maliki School" was the means used to encourage a "Western-inspired population policy," accused Ms. Sobo.

Dr. Omran, a professor of population and health at the University of Maryland in the U.S., told the Jordan Times that these claims were "baseless."

He described non-religious efforts to counter Western-assisted fertility programmes as resulting from suspicion of anything the North does with the South.

"If it (population control programmes) is a good thing, why is the West trying to give it to us?" is a question asked by these conspiracy theorists, according to the Egyptian professor.

Dr. Omran asserted that exponential population growth has and will continue to adversely affect the well-being of a country and its citizens.

Referring to IPFA charges that he twisted Islam in order to demonstrate its support of reducing fertility rates, Dr. Omran stated that "verses from the Holy Koran can not be falsified as anyone can go and read it."

These are excerpts from the Koran that show support for maintaining a balanced population, and those leaders who are opposed to such activity as being anti-Islamic include those who believe that if God creates he will also feed, he said.

Ms. Sobo, a U.S. citizen, described the balance between the number of people in a particular country and its production and consumption abilities as naturally balancing.

If the population grows, the country will develop means to support them, she said.

In addition, she described the programmes as "expensive, complicated and with an uncertain outcome."

Regarding large families, Ms. Sobo said that "there is no such thing as a limit on children... children are an investment in the

future... I myself have eight children."

According to Werner Fornos, president of the Population Institute in Washington, D.C., "one must balance the population according to resources."

Statistics demonstrate that countries experience an increase in the standard of living when their population growth stabilizes, according to Mr. Fornos.

"China had a 12% growth in GNP last year, and Taiwan, Mexico, South Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore are among the many whose standard of living has increased as a result of resources freed with the success of a growth control programme, he stated.

Regarding allegations of conspiracies to handicap the development of the Third World through reduced fertility rates, Mr. Fornos said "hogwash."

It is clear whether from Western sources or from women in LDCs that their health, education, and ability to work is directly linked to the number of children they have, he said.

Although the debate will not end at the conclusion of this conference, it is clear that its presence is offering the public a chance to look at the array of choices available in proposed population policies facing it.

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WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition of paintings by artist Mohammad Nasrallah at Al Balqa Gallery, Fubeis City.
- ★ Art exhibition by Nawwaf Al Bukhari at the Phoenix Art Gallery.
- ★ Art exhibition entitled "The Legend of Petra II" by artist Suha Shmman at the National Gallery for Fine Arts.
- ★ Exhibition of national heritage and traditional handicrafts at Mutah University.
- ★ Exhibition entitled "Re-creation" by Jordanian, French and Iraqi artists, inspired by a sculpture by Iraqi artist Mohammad Hussein Abdullah, at the French Cultural Centre.

LECTURE

- ★ Lecture, in Arabic, on "The Social Changes and Delinquency Problems in the Jordanian Society" by Dr. Sabri Rubehat at the Scientific and Cultural Centre of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 6 p.m.

FILM

- ★ Film entitled "The Adventure of Baron Munchausen" at the British Council at 7 p.m.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1979.

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Talks and bitter acts

THE ISRAELI prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, can close the West Bank for ever, but the Palestinian people will not disappear and their continued resistance to Israel's brutal occupation will only escalate. By the same token, the intifada will not end with statements like those made by U.S. State Department spokesmen almost every day. While it is true that "only a political settlement will help solve the problems that underlie the violence in the Middle East," as Richard Boucher put it a couple of days ago, it is also true that the Palestinians under Israeli occupation cannot accept this logic without any question. It is extremely difficult for them to wait for "a political settlement" that would end their plight while their occupiers literally get away with murder in conducting the affairs of occupation. As far back as Palestinians can remember, and as far ahead as they can foretell, they see the prospect of a settlement as too dim, too far-fetched. For the Palestinians no political settlement short of a complete end of occupation can end their grievances. While the Palestinians see their leadership making one concession after the other to Israel, they increasingly feel that Israel is not moving towards a compromise. On the contrary, Israel continues to suppress Palestinian national feelings; it continues its settlement policy on Palestinian lands; it sends its troops to each and every street and alley in the West Bank and Gaza to terrorise children and kill innocent adults. Israel's human rights record in the occupied territories is appalling. Detentions without charges, imprisonment without justice, deportations based on illegal grounds, slave labour, confiscation of land and plundering of Palestinian national resources are but a few of the measures that Israel undertakes against the Palestinian people, continually and in contravention of basic human rights, international law and the Geneva conventions.

The Americans are probably right to say that Israel "has the responsibility for providing security for its people," since each country has such an obligation to its citizens, but for an official State Department spokesman to conclude that Israel also had the responsibility to ensure "security of the territory under its control" is open to interpretation. Any misuse of terms by American officials at this stage can only be called inappropriate and can only lead to more violence. In this context, Boucher's statement the other day, which does not talk about "people" but only "territories" under Israeli control can only be offensive. Each and every Palestinian, the State Department needs to be reminded, takes great offence at the use of such language, especially in view of the fact that the U.S. chooses to occasionally reiterate its commitment to U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

Both the American and Israeli governments should recognise that Palestinian resistance, besides its legitimacy, carries only one message: end occupation. On the other hand, Israeli violence only reasserts that occupation will persist. While the U.S. urges "all the parties to act with restraint," it cannot expect the Palestinians to comply when Israel does not.

Meanwhile, Israel should adopt some of the U.S.-called-for confidence building measures in Gaza and the West Bank. Starving Palestinians and placing them under perpetual curfews is a prescription for increased violence. As the lessons of the intifada have shown, Palestinian resistance is not lacking in resourcefulness. Harsh Israeli measures might only provide a respite, but pushing the Palestinians against the wall will only result in more bloodshed and violence. If this is the only way to push the negotiation forward, then everybody needs to learn from the bitter experience.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

IN HIS address to the Arab labour conference, in Amman His Majesty King Hussein summed up the concerns of the Arab World and the problems facing the Arab masses and called for a revolution that would benefit the masses rather than the leaders, said Sawi Al Shaba daily Tuesday. The paper echoed the King's criticism of the one-man rule in many Arab countries, emphasising the need for the people to be given a say in the Arab World, and for political pluralism to dominate the life of the Arab World. A new and comprehensive revolution is needed in the Arab World that would cater to the needs of the people rather than the leaders, stressed the paper. But it said any progress in the life of a nation should be guaranteed by the freedoms of the people and their participation in the government. The paper referred to the Jordanian experiment in political pluralism and said that it serves as a model to be copied by other parts of the Arab World, because the past four years, it said, have witnessed democracy in Jordan unprecedented in the other Arab countries, saw the institutions enhanced and strengthened, and political parties formed to express the view of the various sectors of the public. The paper echoed the King's call on the Arabs to transcend the negative elements of the Gulf crisis and to forge ahead towards unity of ranks, solidarity and close cooperation in every field.

IF THE Arab labour ministers chose Amman for a venue of their meeting, to demonstrate their solidarity, then this is a welcome idea because they are in need of such solidarity after the Gulf crisis, said Tareq Masarweh, a columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily. If these ministers chose Amman because of the freedom of speech and press in this country, then they have rightly done so because in this Kingdom people speak off their minds freely, unlike most of the Arab World, the writer continued. However, it is the Arab masses in the rest of the Arab World that are in need to see real and concrete results that can be implemented on the ground and an outcome that would win the approval of the Arab masses, the writer said. He said that the Arab ministers should realise that Jordan seeks to serve all Arab countries without waiting for any reward, but this Kingdom can by no means compromise its principles and national stands. Jordan, which opened its arms to welcome the evicted expatriates, does not bear a grudge against the Arab Gulf states but is ready to offer its service and assistance to all Arabs, regardless of their past attitude towards Jordan, he continued. The writer wished the Arab ministers success in their endeavour, urging them to opt for collective action to serve the national interests.

Economic Forum

Modernised taxation conception

By Dr. Abdalla Malki

I WAS really joyed when I read in the *Economist* (March 13, 1993) a commentary on taxes which corroborated a conception which I preached in Jordan during the last three years. My viewpoint is that the emphasis in taxation should be placed on the circulation of income (and wealth) not on the generation of income, or, in other words, on consumption or spending and not on production. I ventured to conclude that taxes on consumption were fairer than those on income. Now this challenges a widespread long-standing classical conviction that direct taxes (namely, income tax) are fairer than indirect ones (consumption or spending taxes).

Another point which I tirelessly emphasised is well known but I thought it could have become pretty tarnished after the apparent eclipse of the era of supply-side economics, that is high income taxes penalise productivity, suppress production incentives, enhance tax evasion and eventually reduce tax revenues. It was heartening to find that the *Economist* believes that this argument is still as valid as ever.

On the first count, the *Economist* writes that "the least damaging taxes are those that are fair, simple and which interfere least with economic decision-making. This suggests two golden rules. First, that it is better to tax spending than to tax income. And, second, that the tax base should be as broad as possible in order to keep tax rates low."

On the second count, the *Economist* states that "the worst way to increase revenue is to lift marginal income-tax rates. High rates of tax encourage tax evasion and avoidance, and discourage hard work and the taking of risks". Of course, it is well known that this is exactly the road which Jordan chose to take under the present adjustment programme when it hiked, in 1989, the marginal income tax rate.

The first point is the more interesting one as it entails the notion that tax on spending — which is an indirect tax — is a fair tax. This has been our explicit conviction but our argumentation was different and, allegedly, more profound.

Taxes paid should depend proportionately on the capacity to pay; this is the spirit of true progressive taxation. The capacity to pay is best measured by how much a person spends, not by how much he earns in terms of income. According to classical theorisation, a person who earns an income of, say, JD 500 a month must pay an income tax, while another who earns no income whatsoever but nevertheless receives (from a relative) a monthly grant of, say, JD 1,000 will pay no income tax. Obviously, the capacity to pay of the latter is much more than that of the former. A truly fair and equitable tax system is one which ensures that each of these two persons pay tax according to his revenues and not only according to his income. In technical terms,

revenues refer to income plus grants; income does not include grants.

The spending-based tax system serves the purpose here. The person who receives the grant pays more taxes because he spends more. Taxes should be levied according to how much a person earns in terms of revenues, not income. When I put this suggestion to a senior Jordanian taxman last year, he objected strongly, wondering how it could be possible for him to know how much citizens received or gave in terms of grants and other much sources of revenues. I explained that he had not to; every citizen will, automatically, honestly and very accurately, announce his taxable revenue by merely spending it and when he spends it. The very formidable obstacle of identifying accurately the taxable amount is thus surmounted.

When I put this suggestion to a Jordanian senator, he made a different criticism. He inquired what would happen if people who received very high grants did not spend their revenues. My answer was that this would be even better because they would be saving them in this case. Savings help the cause of the national economy much more than spending. Additionally, their savings would be spent by other parties, i.e., by the investors who borrow them directly or indirectly (through the banking system) and use them to generate other incomes which further finance taxable spending.

Clinton needs to get deportee issue right

By Clovis Maksoud

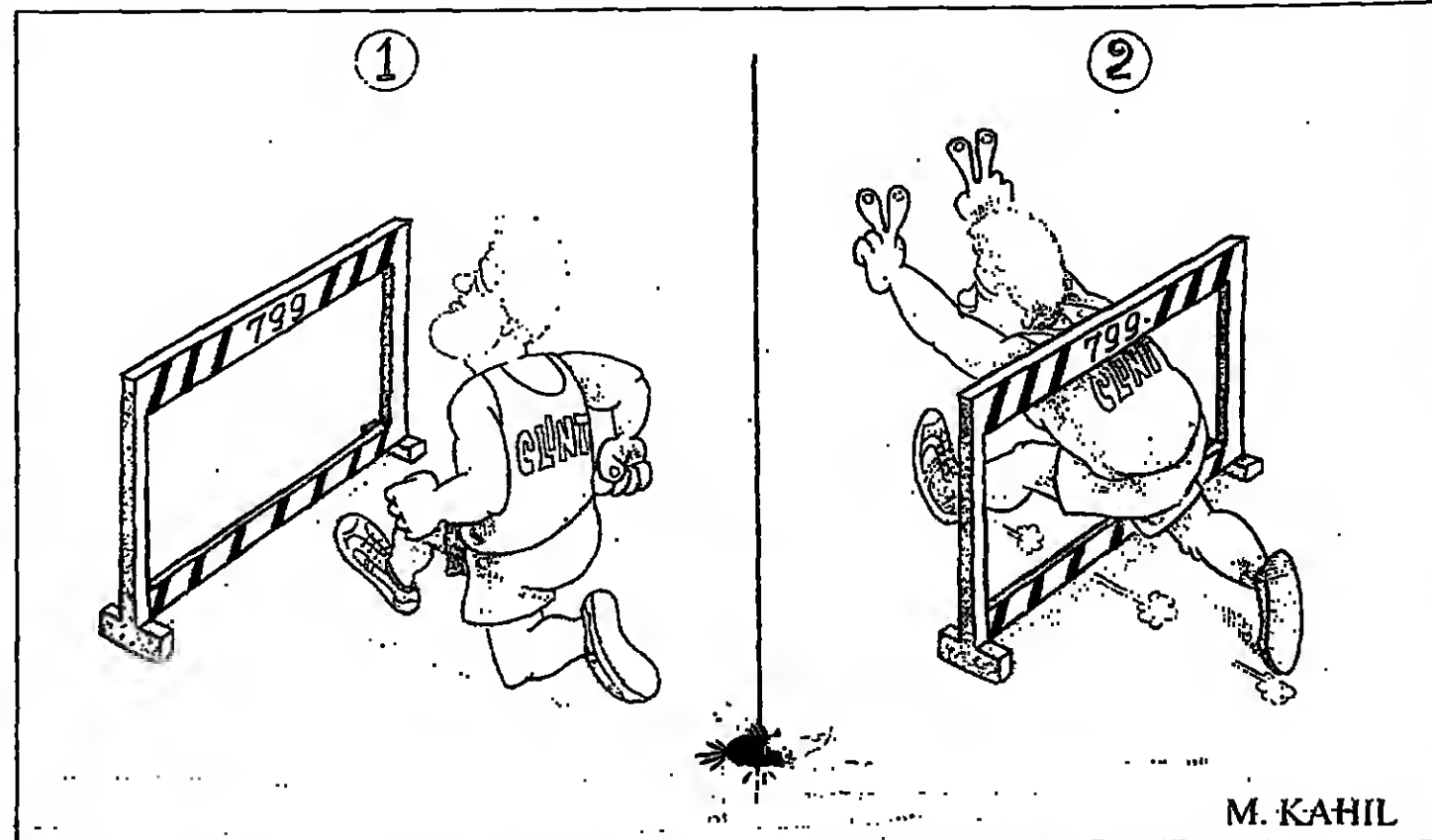
After two days of talks in Damascus recently, the Arabs taking part in the Middle East peace talks sent President Bill Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin a clear message about the importance of resolving the question of Palestinian expellees in Lebanon.

The foreign ministers of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and the Palestine Liberation Organisation postponed a decision on whether to accept United States Secretary of State Warren Christopher's invitation to resume peace talks on April 20. In their communiqué, they "expressed concern at the American role, which has not led to the achievement of progress in the peace process so far" and noted that Mr. Rabin's recent visit to Washington "raised suspicions and increased Arab concerns on the future of the peace talks."

At a joint press conference at the end of Rabin's visit, Mr. Clinton noted that the two did not discuss the question of the Palestinian deportees. He said that the issue had been settled earlier when the U.S. and Israel negotiated a mechanism for the deportees' return. The president either deliberately or unwittingly dismissed the principal reason why the Palestinians so far have refused to accept the U.S. invitation to resume a ninth round of talks.

Mr. Clinton's dismissal of the issue in such a cavalier manner is mind-boggling. The arrangement between Mr. Christopher and Mr. Rabin was a non-starter because it did not address the core issue of Israel's "right" to deport. Deportation as a practice, let alone a right, is anathema to the Palestinians, as it is to the entire international community.

Acquiescence to deportation dooms the Palestinians to existence at the pleasure of Israeli authorities. Exercising a right to deport — even as an "exceptional measure" — validates Israel's claim to the occupied territories and ratifies its practice of uprooting Palestinians. What is at stake is whether or not Israel is an occupying power and whether or not Palestinians have a right to a national patrimony in the occupied territories. The Palestinian delegation to the talks was deeply and rightly hurt as the peace process became perceived as a



step away from their rights, instead of towards achieving them. This should not mean that a ninth round of talks will not take place. It does mean, however, that the Clinton administration should carefully study the reasons why the Palestinians declined the invitation to the next round of talks.

The peace process initiated in Madrid was based on a phased implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. With the end of the cold war and the defanging of Iraq as a military power, the strategic dependency of the Gulf states on the U.S. coupled with Egypt's separate peace with Israel, rendered the agenda, the terms of reference, and the conduct of the peace process skewed against Palestinian national rights. The structure and modalities of the process enabled Israel to depict the promise of even the most minute compliance with any part of the U.S. as a major concession. The U.S. in turn markets such possible concessions as an inducement for the Arab parties to continue the peace process.

When Israel's minor compliances were depicted as concessions and accepted as such by the U.S., the flaws in the peace process began to surface. Only the unhealed wounds in the Arab body politic and the disarray in Arab ranks enabled the process to continue with no results except a sustained U.S. hessing. Arab parties could not express their frustration, lest they be deemed rejectionist or unrealistic.

When the Labour government replaced Likud in Israel last year, the U.S. felt that the process could be construed in a manner where pressure on the Arabs becomes justified, while placating Israel remains the instrument of dealing with it. The Clinton administration considered the process as a constant, but its flaws became intolerable to the Arabs when Israel persisted in its deportation policy.

The escalation of repressive measures and violence in Israel prompted Mr. Rabin to cut short his U.S. trip. The compromise solution, however well-intentioned and negotiated by Mr. Christopher with Israel, could not defuse the situation. While on his listening tour of Arab capitals, it appears that Mr.

Christopher wanted to hear what he wanted to hear. He listened to the Palestinians explain the importance of resolving the deportation issue; he also listened to Lebanon describe the relevance of reintroducing U.N. Security Council Resolution 425 into the framework of the peace process in order to ensure Lebanon's sovereignty in the south. Yet by issuing the invitations it seems he listened to the Palestinian and the Lebanese, but did not hear them.

This brings to the forefront a very serious flaw that, unless rectified, can detonate an already volatile situation. The flaw appears in Mr. Christopher's statement that the "Palestinians need to recognise that their interests lay in pursuing peace talks — at the end of the day that will be the controlling reality." In declining to receive the invitation, the Palestinians are saying that the U.S. is right about the reality but not necessarily right when it describes it as "controlling."

There are two asymmetries in the peace process. One is between the Arabs and Israel, reinforced by Mr. Clinton's reaf-

firmation of the U.S. commitment to Israel's military edge over the Arabs, a fact grudgingly accepted since the Camp David agreements. The second governs the Arab parties. Syria, the strongest, has the least at stake; the Palestinians, the weakest, have the most at stake. It is this asymmetry that Israel hopes to exploit. For this reason Mr. Rabin, with some kind of U.S. support, is dangling the prospect of a nebulous withdrawal from the Golan Heights in return for a clearer Syrian distance (preferably a separate peace) from the Palestinian cause and demands. If this tactic fails, Mr. Rabin's government will try to respond to U.S. pleas to soften its oppressive measures and violations of human rights in the occupied territories in return for Palestinian acceptance of an Israeli definition of "self-governing authority."

The deportation of more than 400 Palestinians upset the equation. Mr. Rabin's visit to the U.S. was designed to ensure that the peace process is resumed in accordance with Israel's agenda. To achieve this objective, the issue of the deportees was subsumed within the broader con-

cern with Islamic fundamentalism. Mr. Rabin and the pro-Israel lobby now suggest that Israel's deportation of Hamas sympathisers supports the moderate Arab states engaged in their own challenges from Islamic fundamentalists. Besides the embarrassment that such a suggestion causes the so-called "moderates," it could lead Americans to misread the overall Arab situation. Moreover, Israel's effort to marginalise the deportation issue is a means to avoid admitting that it is actually an occupying power in the occupied territories.

While the present disarray among Arab states might lend temporary credence to Mr. Rabin's strategy, any signal that such a strategy is a determinant of the peace process is bound to undermine it, throwing the Middle East into the turbulence that the process ostensibly seeks to avoid. Indeed, Syria will not order any circumstances favour, let alone sign, a separate peace treaty with Israel, even in exchange for the entire Golan Heights. This because of historical and geopolitical factors, as well as its proclaimed role. Moreover, the legacy of its national, ideological, and emotional bonds with the Palestinian people constitutes an insurmountable barrier.

Treating Mr. Rabin's approach to the peace process as indicative of Israel's willingness to "take risks" for peace further reinforces the impression that Israel is making concessions, rather than complying with U.N. resolutions and the norms of international law and the Geneva Convention. Thus, it is Israel's agenda that appears to set the course for the resumed peace process. Herein lies the dilemma for the Arab parties, none of whom wants to be absent from the ninth round of talks, yet who find themselves excluded by the Clinton administration from the discourse. Even if the Arab parties join the ninth round, they do so in deference to U.S. power rather than in expectation of concrete results.

Clovis Maksoud, a professor at the American University in Washington, and director of the Centre for the Study of the Global South, was formerly the ambassador of the League of Arab States to the U.S. and the U.N. The article is reprinted from the *Christian Science Monitor*.

Corruption scandals: Is something rotten in Europe?

By Victor L. Simpson
The Associated Press

ROME — A banking scandal implicates top officials in Rome and helps bring down the government. "We live in an age when the people have lost confidence in those who represent them," a newspaper rails.

In Paris, thousands of Frenchmen barked by a crooked banker take to the streets in protest and another government crashes.

The Italian scandal occurred a century ago and the French crisis, known as the Stavisky affair, in 1933. But now, at a time of unimagined prosperity 50 years after the destruction of World War II, the rot has returned to Europe.

A year-long investigation by Italian magistrates has reached into corporate boardrooms and the highest levels of politics. It has produced nearly 1,000 arrests, implicated four cabinet ministers and a former premier, and led to seven suicides.

"Tangentopoli," or kickback city, as the scandal is called, mainly involves illegal kickbacks to political parties for public works contracts,

although investigators also are digging into the mafia's role as an intermediary.

Financial scandals also have arisen in France, Germany, Spain and elsewhere, none so vast as in Italy but with similar elements: long-entrenched parties, cronyism, influence peddling.

The end of the cold war and communism has led Western Europeans to question the blank cheque they gave their politicians over the past five decades.

To some Europeans, the generational change at the White House may underline a need for new leaders of their own, and for at least some of the standards by which America judges politicians.

The new morality has led several stock exchanges to adopt their first insider-trading laws. Many Italian politicians have given up chauffeured cars and expensive restaurants, and a candidate for mayor of Rome even commutes by motor scooter. The Greek press has begun aggressively pursuing any whiff of scandal.

Ordinary Europeans are expressing outrage at the ballot box. French voters gave the right

a huge victory in first round elections at the expense of President Francois Mitterrand's Socialists, who have controlled parliament for 10 of the past 12 years.

In Germany, pollsters attribute some of the far right's gain in local elections to the identification of mainstream parties with a series of scandals.

Italy's investigating judges have become heroes as they carry on their revolution. Italians are expected to strike a further blow in an April 10 referendum that would loosen the grip of the long-ruling parties.

"There's a weakness in the system that lends itself to this climate of scandals," Pascal Perrineau of the Centre for Study of French Political Life said before the French election. "There are no checks and balances, no commissions, no parliamentary investigations."

A Marseille police inspector who wrote about his thwarted probe of kickbacks to political parties was fired. In Italy, until the current scandal, judges who dared challenge the system either struck insurmountable obstacles or were transferred,

according to reports now emerging.

Some of the scandals seen minor — Germany's economics minister resigned over his promotion of a shopping-cart locking device made by an in-law — but others are of wider scope.

The German defence ministry suspended work on a three billion mark (\$1.8 billion) military system after allegations that the German subcontractor entertained officials at his retreat in Brazil, also paying for their air tickets.

One of the officials, the governor of Bavaria, said in response that he had made donations to worthy causes roughly equal to the trip's cost.

France has been rocked by disclosures that the Socialist Party won the 1988 parliamentary elections by widespread violations of campaign financing laws. To stave off prosecution of members, parliament gave itself amnesty in 1989.

Pierre Berégovoy, the current socialist premier, is under fire for accepting an interest-free loan of one million francs (\$100,000) from a financier described as an old friend, but it is not clear whether a political

payoff was involved. Repayment was made in the form of old books.

Particularly offensive to the French is what they see as a cover-up of the state health system's having allowed hemophiliacs to receive AIDS-tainted blood, resulting in at least 300 deaths.

The former director of the national blood bank is serving a four-year prison term, but no cabinet ministers have been tried despite evidence that some knew of the policy.

In Spain, Premier Felipe Gonzalez's Socialists have been linked to several financial scandals. One involves allegations that Siemens, a German company, paid \$8 million in kickbacks to land a contract for work on a high-speed train linking Madrid and Seville.

Far away Japan, buffeted by one financial scandal after another, shows some of Italy's characteristics: A party that has ruled for nearly 40 years and a close relationship between business and government.

"Corruption happens in many countries, including America, but in Italy things got out of hand," said British

historian Denis Mack Smith, a expert on the country.

With the same parties being kept in power for 40 years to keep the communists out, he said, "nobody wanted to rock the boat. Everyone just turned a blind eye."

Public indignation has reached such heights that Franco Zeffirelli, the movie and opera director, was quoted as recommending that a guillotine for the corrupt be erected in the Piazza del Popolo.

Such rhetoric aside, a public outcry forced the government to withdraw a decree that would have removed the penalties for illicit political financing.

A much-acclaimed new study of Italian institutions by Harvard Professor Robert Putnam takes the long view that corruption flourishes where civic consciousness has been lacking for centuries.

Some say the reporting of the scandals is a healthy sign. "That's the difference between democracy and dictatorship," said Iring Fetscher, a political science professor at Frankfurt University. "If it comes out, this is already a sign of recovery from a disease."

Egyptian court launches retrial of Abdul Rahman

FAIYUOM, Egypt (R) — A state security court began a retrial Tuesday of the exiled spiritual leader of Muslim militants seeking to topple the Egyptian government and of suspects in New York's World Trade Centre blast.

The civilian high emergency security court in this desert oasis town charged Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman and 48 others with conspiracy in the 1989 murder of a policeman and "mobilising the people to overthrow the government."

Eleven of Sheikh Abdul Rahman's co-defendants, locked in a cage inside the courthouse, told reporters they had been taken from their homes Tuesday morning to appear before the court.

Scores of riot police with shields and fixed bayonets ringed the courthouse in Faiyuum. Sheikh Abdul Rahman's home town and stronghold about 100 kilometres southwest of Cairo.

Sheikh Abdul Rahman and the others were acquitted of the same charges in 1989. Egyptian officials reopened the case last month and ordered the retrial after President Hosni Mubarak nullified the original verdict in January, judicial sources said.

Sheikh Abdul Rahman, a blind preacher revered by Egyptian Islamic fundamentalists, has lived in the New York area since 1990. Five of his alleged followers there are being held in connection with the February bombing of the World Trade Centre which killed six people and injured more than 1,000.

The government does not want the innocence of Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, they want to crush him," the preacher's lawyer Adel Aymouni told reporters.

He said Sheikh Abdul Rahman had received no formal legal summons to attend the retrial from the Egyptian embassy in Washington. He said he had spoken by telephone with his client last week.

It was not immediately clear what penalties Sheikh Abdul Rahman and others would face if convicted, although they would have the right to appeal to Egypt's supreme court.

Mr. Aymouni said some of the other defendants had been outside Egypt since 1989. "Militants from Al Gama'a Al Islamiya (Islamic Group), the main group fighting the government in a year-long surge of political violence, regard Sheikh Abdul Rahman as the spiritual guide behind their bid to topple the government and set up a purist Islamic state."

They have killed police, Christians and foreign tourists in their campaign, which has ruined the country's vital tourist industry, prompted ruthless police crackdown and tarnished the country's image in the international community.

Sheikh Abdul Rahman, who has been questioned by U.S. federal agents over the New York bombing, was tried and acquitted in 1982 of "sanctifying" the assassination the year before of Mr. Mubarak's predecessor, Anwar Sadat.

A U.S. immigration court has ruled the preacher should be deported for entering the country on false information, but Sheikh Abdul Rahman, who denies inciting violence, is appealing against that in a process his U.S. lawyers say may take months.

Egyptian officials announced they would retry the preacher two weeks ago but political leaders have publicly played down his importance in the militant movement, saying he would be welcome to return home like any Egyptian citizen.

Sheikh Abdul Rahman worked for five years in Saudi Arabia, and travelled to Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan and other Muslim countries in the late 1980s.

Egyptian officials have accused him of sending cheques worth \$140,000 from the United States to fund militants in Egypt.

visited the Army General Headquarters where he was received by the newly-appointed chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Lieutenant-General Abdul Hafez Mirai, the chief of staff of the land forces, the assistants of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the inspector general and the chief of staff of the Royal Air Force.

King Hussein congratulated Gen. Mirai on his new post and discussed with him issues of concern to the Armed Forces.

Also Tuesday, King Hussein received at the Royal Court former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Fathi Abu Taleb.

King Hussein conferred upon Field Marshal Abu Taleb the distinguished Al Nahda Medal in appreciation of his performance in service over the past 43 years.

King Hussein also conferred upon the director of the Civil Defence Department, Major-General Afif Al Gboul, the Al Istiklal Medal of the First Order.

The King also conferred upon Lieutenant-General Salem Al Turk, former army chief of staff of the land forces, the Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order. Gen. Turk was retired this week.

Clinton says U.S. 'full partner'

(Continued from page 1)

George Bush, who exerted pressure on Israel to comply with U.S. wishes, may be softened by Mr. Clinton.

Mr. Clinton sought to assure Mr. Mubarak that the United States will not tilt towards Israel, the administration officials said.

The White House already has stressed that Egypt's annual \$2.3 billion in aid will not be cut, despite growing unease among Americans about the size of the U.S. foreign aid package.

Mr. Clinton and Mr. Mubarak both denounced terrorism, with Mr. Clinton saying they were "determined to counter Iran's involvement in terrorism, and its active opposition to the Middle East peace process."

"Both our nations have suffered from the tragic consequences of terrorism," Mr. Clinton said.

Mr. Mubarak said in a New York Times interview published Monday that Egyptian intelligence supplied the United States with general information that might have prevented the Feb. 26 bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York.

Mr. Clinton said he had "ordered a complete review of what the United States was told" by the Egyptians last year. Mr. Mubarak said the information did not involve "definite information," on the World Trade Centre bombing.

After his four-day visit to Washington, Mr. Mubarak is to fly to Paris for talks Wednesday with French President Francois Mitterrand.

Two soldiers look at Gaza's violence, see different stories

By Ron Kampeas
The Associated Press

GAZA CITY, occupied Gaza Strip — This is the story of two Israeli soldiers stationed in the occupied territories: A pessimist and an optimist, a reservist and a professional officer, a man hates his job and one who loves it.

But it does not have a happy ending — or even an end in sight. In the fifth year of the Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation, the issues that brought the protest to a head are still unresolved. Frustration is mounting on both sides.

"There's a feeling of futility for soldiers in Gaza," says Sergeant T, carefully keeping watch from the back of a command car rumbling through Gaza City.

"Ten men did not even turn up for service," he adds, refer-

ring to members of his reserve unit who could face jail for refusing their annual month's duty in the Gaza Strip.

Major Eldad, a commander in northern Gaza, sees a different Gaza as he relaxes in a headquarters tent hung with maps, invigorated by a tour in the field.

"The army is in control and they (the Palestinians) are fatigued," he says.

Under military regulations, the soldiers' full names cannot be used. Both are young and unmarried, both serve in crack infantry units — the sergeant in the Golani Brigade and Maj. Eldad in the Givati Brigade.

They were interviewed as Israel tries to find new ways to battle a Palestinian uprising that has increasingly turned to the use of guns, including ambushes on soldiers.

In March alone Gazans were blamed for eight Israeli

deaths in the strip and Israel itself, while 18 Palestinians were fatally shot in clashes with troops in Gaza.

Fearing that the army has lost control in Gaza, right-wing politicians have demanded the government move to a war footing there. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin rejected the idea, as well as calls by cabinet left-wingers that Israel unilaterally leave the strip.

Instead, last week he sealed off Gaza and the occupied West Bank indefinitely. This means 1.5 million Palestinians — including some 110,000 wage earners — cannot enter Israel. In the past, such closures have led to more violence in the occupied lands.

But Maj. Eldad, 28, dismisses suggestions that Gaza has deteriorated into a war situation. "The use of the word 'war' to describe a civil uprising reflects an ignorance of

military issues," said the beefy, crew-cut officer.

He blames the Israeli media for exaggerating events, saying the uprising was much worse five years ago when it began.

At that time the army faced mass demonstrations. Now, Maj. Eldad says he spends his time hunting down men wanted for armed attacks.

"The amateurs have gone home," he said. "The people are tired, so the hard core learns new tricks."

He says the use of guns represents the desperation of uprising leaders and predicts the morale of the attackers will be broken.

"I sleep maybe two hours a night. I don't let myself go home until I have captured at least one wanted man," the major says.

Sgt. T, 24, also says the situation in Gaza has changed. "The other day, a soldier in

my unit who speaks Arabic translated graffiti for me," he says. "It read: 'Don't throw stones, we'll take care of them.' It was decorated with guns."

But the sergeant, who describes himself as right-wing, does not think the Palestinians are broken.

"You see a two-year-old picking up a pebble and tossing it at you, and you know it's here to stay," he says. "Gaza is a no-win situation, it is like a cancer under the belly of Israel... we accomplish nothing by staying."

Sgt. T's commander orders his troops off the car. They cock their assault rifles and patrol Gaza City's Saladin Street, named after the famed Muslim warrior.

They maintain a steady jog, hugging the walls, four men on one side, three on the other. Another command car pro-

vides back-up.

It is Friday. Aside from the presence of the troops, it is a languid afternoon in the sunny, dusty town. Chickens turn on a spit in a barbecue shop, and men lounge along the street. A small girl sucks a popsicle.

Maj. Eldad, told of Sgt. T's views, notes that reservists "bring moral considerations based on political beliefs here. I am a professional. I have only army considerations."

The army evidently agrees. It has announced plans to replace all reserve units in Gaza with regular troops.

Sgt. T returns from patrol as the sunlight fades. Under his visored helmet is a bright yellow baseball cap. He watches other soldiers, granted leaves for the Jewish sabbath, waving down cars for lifts out of the strip.

"I don't even tell my parents I'm in Gaza," he says.

New security moves seen in the making in Algeria

ALGIERS (AP) — Defence Minister Khaled Nezzar met Monday with the ambassadors of the United States and France, reportedly signalling that new security measures could be put in place shortly to counter Islamic extremists.

General Nezzar, the strongman of Algeria's five-man ruling committee, discussed "questions of common interest" in separate meetings with U.S. Ambassador Mary Ann Casey and French Ambassador Bernard Kessedjian, the official APS news agency reported without comment.

The embassies' defence attaches were present at the meetings, along with Gen. Nezzar's counsel, APS said.

Reliable sources linked the meetings with promised new security measures, announced in March by Prime Minister Belaid Abdul Salam, and said they would be put in place shortly.

The support of France, Algeria's top trading partner, and the United States are crucial to Algeria's economic recovery. The country's battered economy is seen as the motor behind the Muslim fundamentalist movement, whose banning spawned the violence.

The sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, provided no information on what the measures could entail. The prime minister never specified.

They would be in addition to a series of steps taken over the past 14 months to counter attacks by Islamic extremists that have left more than 600 people dead on both sides.

British woman continues battle for custody of 2 sons

CAIRO (AP) — A British mother battling her Egyptian husband for custody of their two sons resumed her 3½-year-old fight at court Monday vowing: "I won't give up."

Pamela Green, 38, brought two character witnesses to testify in the crowded south Cairo primary court. She went through 19 similar hearings in another court for two years until the court ruled in February 1992 that it lacked jurisdiction.

Her husband's lawyer failed to produce two character witnesses and the court postponed the case to April 26 at his request.

Ms. Green and her Egyptian-born, British national husband, Abdul Salam Ahmad, were divorced in 1988. British courts gave her custody of daughter Yasmeen and sons Sawy and Sammie, but Mr. Ahmad flew the children back to Cairo for a vacation in 1989 and refused to take them back.

Ms. Green said her problem began when Mr. Ahmad telephoned her after arriving in Cairo with the children and "said he had some bad news."

"He told me that I would never see my children again. And that if I tried to come to Cairo for them, he would have me killed and buried and one would care because I am a foreigner," she said.

Ms. Green, wearing a navy blazer and a white-and-blue print skirt, spoke to the Associated Press at the courthouse.

"I borrowed money and came to Cairo. My former husband had left the three children with his parents and travelled to the United States," Ms. Green said. The

grandparents let her see the children a few times in their home.

Seeing that her court case was going nowhere by December 1990, Ms. Green used four "friends" to help her kidnap her children. She only succeeded in taking her daughter, and her former father-in-law got away with the two boys after knifing her in the body so badly she required extensive surgery.

"The last time I saw my sons were that terrible day when they saw their grandfather stab me," recalled Ms. Green, who has converted to Islam with the name Hebatallah Ahmad. "For all I know, they have told him I am dead and have brainwashed them against me."

Yasmeen, now 12, is in Britain. The children's grandfather was sentenced to seven years in jail for the attack on Ms. Green.

Under Egyptian law, divorced women get custody of children until girls are 12, boys 10. Ms. Green's elder son, Sawy, is 10, Sammie 9.

At 12 and 10, the law grants custody to the father unless the children specify otherwise. Although the law makes no exceptions, custody sometimes is not so clear-cut when the mother is foreign and especially Western.

"I am afraid now that new court will ask for the two older children to question them about who they want to be with," Ms. Green said. But "I'm afraid to bring Yasmeen back to Cairo officially, and I am afraid they have brainwashed the boys against me."

"It is very difficult, but I won't give up."

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UAE sets 10% capital adequacy requirement

ABU DHABI (R) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is tightening control of its banks by requiring them to maintain capital adequacy levels of 10 per cent, higher than standards set by the bank for International Settlements (BIS).

The UAE central bank said Monday it was setting quarterly deadlines for banks to report their capital adequacy levels to prove they are in line with the rule, which goes into effect on July 1.

Capital adequacy is the ratio between shareholders' equity and assets. Sufficient levels are intended to minimise the risk to a bank's creditors and depositors.

"This ratio obliges banks to maintain, at all times, a minimum level of 10 per cent of total risk weighted assets relative to the capital base," the bank said in a statement.

"Banks in the UAE already now have a large capital base, which makes it possible to set a higher ratio than recommended by the Basle-based committee."

The decision follows repeated urging by the Arab League and the Basle-based BIS for banks to maintain a minimum eight per cent capital adequacy.

The central bank said last June it would enforce the BIS ratio levels. It informed UAE commercial banks Sunday they must submit reports based on two types of capital used in calculating the ratio within two weeks of the end of each quarter.

One banker said in calculating the ratio, banks will have to deduct shortfalls in their provisions every year instead of rolling over money set aside for potential losses year after year.

"They will have to deal with their provisions each year or it will have an effect on their capital adequacy," he said.

Bankers said some of the UAE's 46 commercial banks continued to have ratios of less than four per cent. Ratios already are as high as 10 per cent among the stronger banks.

"Some UAE banks will be faced with the problem and may have to merge," a banker said.

The central bank said it wanted to provide a cushion against losses to depositors and customers and increase confidence in the sector.

UAE banks suffered losses in the mid-1980s after a rush in lending during the oil boom. Many banks closed or merged after loans failed to perform.

Rouble falls to 712 per dollar

MOSCOW (R) — The rouble dropped to a record low of 712 to the dollar on the Moscow Interbank Currency Exchange Tuesday from 692 at the previous trading session on Thursday. It was the first time the currency — under pressure all year — had weakened to more than 700 to the dollar.

The rouble traded at around 650 to the dollar a month ago and around 415 at the start of the year. Several former Soviet republics have abandoned the rouble but the currency is still used in many states. It has been falling amid soaring Russian inflation and fears that money supply is growing much too fast.

Consumer prices rose more than 2,500 per cent in 1992.

Economic reforms key factor in Yemen polls

SANAA (R) — Yemen's ruling and opposition parties are all promising a revival of a battered economy in their race to secure votes in the country's first general elections to be held on April 27.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh's General People's Congress (GPC) says: "The people's economic suffering is our prime concern. Improving the living standard and keeping away the ghost of poverty is the first target."

The GPC's ruling partner, the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) which held power in the former Marxist South Yemen before the country merged in May 1990, advocates free market principles.

It promised to "defend and encourage private economic ownership... and abide by the laws of the free market economy."

The country's main progressive and nationalist opposition party, which has special influence in southern Yemen, the Yemeni Unionist Gathering Party, warns that "a citizen who lacks the minimum living can easily turn to a criminal."

While the biggest Islamic opposition party, Yemeni Gathering for Reform, says the "principles of the reforms stem from strict adherence to God's laws," and promised a "wise economic, financial and monetary policy."

Yemenis complain that prices of basic commodities are on the rise while the government often faces liquidity problems, making it unable to pay salaries on time.

An annual inflation estimated at 100 per cent was fuelled by a 26-billion rial (\$2.17 billion) budget deficit in 1992 and a steady fall in the value of the currency.

The rial shed about 10 per cent against the dollar in the first quarter of 1993. The dollar now fetches 46 rials on the open market compared to an official exchange rate of 12 rials.

Since January Yemen, one of the region's poorest states, has worked with a budget of monthly allocations based on 1992 figures. Fifteen people were killed last December in cost-of-living riots which engulfed six towns including the capital Sanaa. The riots were the worst since the introduction of free market reforms which followed the unity accord.

Economists expect total expenditure this year to jump to 70 billion rials (\$5.8 billion), partly because of election costs, compared to 1992 expenditure of 58 billion rials (\$4.8 billion).

They say most of the deficit will be covered by an increase in oil production by September of 120,000 barrels per day (b/d). Yemen, which produces about 200,000 b/d, earned some 234 million in oil exports in 1992.

Economists blame the crisis on government extravagance, political chaos, shortage of foreign aid, corruption and lack of long-term planning.

They also say Yemen's problem was triggered by the halt of Gulf Arab aid when Sanaa appeared to side with Baghdad in the 1990-91 Gulf crisis and the expulsion of a million Yemenis from the Gulf whose remittances amounted to \$1.4 billion in 1989.

Opposition parties blame political rivalry and misuse of funds by the two ruling parties.

Syria powers ahead with big electricity deals

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria is investing more than \$900 million to improve electricity generation and meet increasing demand for power supplies, a senior government official said Tuesday.

Zaki Odieh, director-general of Syria's Electricity Authority, told Reuters he expected disruptions in electricity supply, ranging between two to four hours a day, to end within two years.

He said contracts worth around \$710 million for the construction of power stations had been signed with Japanese and Chinese companies. The projects will pump 1,000 megawatts into Syria's power grid.

In addition, a \$200 million Russian-built plant which has begun test production will have a capacity of 400 megawatts, and Mr. Odieh said approval had also been obtained for the construction of a 600 megawatt station near Damascus.

Mr. Odieh said a project to link the electricity networks of Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Jordan and Egypt is due to be completed by 1997 and would also ensure stable supplies.

He attributed much of the power shortage to a decline in the flow of the Euphrates river, where one of Syria's biggest hydroelectric projects is based, and on higher local demand.

Power generation units at the Euphrates dam in central Syria provided 55 to 60 per cent of Syria's electricity needs in 1988, but the figure dropped to only six per cent in recent years. Mr.

Odieh said, Turkey has completed several dams on the Euphrates. Under a provisional water-sharing agreement signed by Syria and Turkey in 1987, more than 500 cubic metres (17,660 cubic ft) per second would flow to Syria.

Damascus has been seeking an increase, but no agreement has been reached.

Mr. Odieh said the new power projects included a 600 megawatt combined cycle generation network consisting of four gas-fired turbines and two steam turbines with a capacity of 100 megawatts each. They will be built by Mitsubishi of Japan in 32 months.

The first four units of the project, located some 100 kilometres north of Damascus, were financed mainly by Japan's Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF). They are due to start commercial production two years from now.

The OECF agreed to provide a \$434 million loan for the project, with Syria financing work costing about \$57 million.

A second \$230 million contract was signed with China's Sichuan Machinery and Equipment Import and Export Corporation to build a 398 megawatt network near the central city of Hama.

Abu Dhabi's Fund for Arab Economic Development would cover 74 per cent of the project's total cost while Syria would provide the rest. Mr. Odieh said the project would be used mainly to supply power to a steel factory due to be built in the area.

Copper prices plunge

LONDON (R) — Copper prices, hit by a wave of selling, plunged to their lowest for almost five years on the London Metal Exchange (LME) Tuesday.

Base metal dealers said technical pressure at around \$2,130 per tonne proved too strong to resist, and when the metal went below this level selling emerged from all quarters.

Prices for forward delivery of the LME's flagship three-month contract collapsed to \$2,090 a tonne, down \$52 from Monday night's close and its lowest since June 1988, and more than \$300 below early-1993 highs of around \$2,400.

Commodity analysts said copper was finally starting to come to terms with so-called market fundamentals after having been buoyed for long periods by unforeseen concerns about supply.

"It now appears that there is nothing to underpin the market in terms of fundamentals," analyst Neil Buxton of Metal Bulletin Research (MBR) in London said.

"It has been looking to go down since the start of the year... but every time it has been rescued by supply problems or the Chinese," he said.

China was a significant buyer at the start of the year, but its acquisitions of the metal has since dried up.

Floods in Arizona in January and February reduced U.S. output, strikes in Mexico and Papua New Guinea in mid-February, and labour problems last month at Chile's Chuquibambilla mine complex all helped to stave off potential declines. LME broker billion-Enthoven Metals said in its latest weekly report.

But these factors now were out of the way and surplus supply was coming into play with stocks of the metal rising on both sides of the Atlantic, analysts said.

Despite a blossoming U.S. economic recovery, the other engines of world growth, Germany and Japan, are still struggling. This means industrial demand for copper, used mainly in the construction, electrical and transportation sectors, would continue to be sluggish.

In the absence of unpredictable supply disruptions or stoppages further price falls were likely, traders said.

"What happens to the price of a commodity in times of surplus is that it goes below the marginal cost of production," MBR's Buxton said.

Cigarette price war could hit premium brands in new markets

LONDON (R) — A full-scale cigarette price war in the United States, prompted by tobacco giant Philip Morris' move to cut the cost of its popular Marlboro, could erode the cachet of such premium brands in growth markets, analysts say.

The mild taste and image-oriented advertising of these brands have spurred export sales at a time of flat to lower cigarette consumption in the key U.S. market.

"The success of the American international brands in the far east is well documented, particularly in places like Korea and Japan," said Eric Lyeonnis, Laing analyst Jonathan Sheehan.

"The danger is that when you start to move the price of an established premium brand down you may start to devalue its image in the eyes of all consumers," he said.

A slow U.S. economic recovery and recession in Europe have made consumers more price conscious, giving rise to what some are calling the "decade of values" in the 1990s.

But some analysts argue that other markets may still be more sensitive to brand status erosion.

Markets in developing countries and the former eastern bloc have become increasingly important to international tobacco giants such as Philip Morris Co. Inc., RJR Nabisco Holdings Corp. and BAT Industries PLC, as health concerns slowly sap cigarette sales in North America and Europe.

Analysts say the margins in some of these new markets are not as attractive as those historically achieved in the United States but the ability to maintain

Russia releases new gold reserve figures

MOSCOW (R) — Russia released new figures for its once-secret gold reserves Tuesday but kept the world guessing on its stocks of platinum and palladium.

Yuri Kotlyar, first deputy chairman of Russia's precious metals committee, said reserves totalled 308 tonnes. The central bank held 133 tonnes and the committee 175 tonnes.

He said Russia had sufficient reserves to hold exports of platinum and palladium steady but declined to give a figure, adding: "They are a secret and they will never be disclosed."

Gold reserves were a tightly guarded secret in the Soviet Union until economist Grigory Yavlinsky shocked the financial world in November 1991 by saying reserves were 240 tonnes.

Western experts had put reserves at twice that level although they agreed that stocks had been falling for several years as the country struggled to find hard currency.

Estimates of Russian reserve levels released since then have ranged from just over 100 tonnes to 320 tonnes.

"The market has overdone on these figures to a certain extent," said Andrew Smith, precious metals analyst at brokers UBS in London.

He did not expect the gold reserve figures to have any impact on prices, although news that Russia held platinum stocks could nudge platinum group metals prices lower.

Mr. Kotlyar told Reuters by telephone that total gold reserves had risen by 20 tonnes in 1992 because of low exports.

Iran gets World Bank loan

WASHINGTON (R) — The World Bank has approved a \$165 million loan for Iran over U.S. protests that the credit would help a country it branded an "international outlaw," bank sources said.

The United States, which has a nearly 20 per cent stake in the World Bank, had been trying to generate support for its position, but so far to no avail. "Iran does not deserve the support of the World Bank," U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher told U.S. lawmakers last week.

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Financial Markets

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date 5/4/1993	Tokyo Close Date 6/4/1993
Sterling Pound*	1.5210	1.5081
Deutsche Mark	1.5945	1.6060
Swiss Franc	1.4765	1.4667
French Franc	5.4151	5.4393 **
Japanese Yen	113.49	114.28
European Currency Unit	1.2156	1.2090 **

Interbank Bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	3.12	3.12	3.31	3.62
Sterling Pound	5.61	5.93	5.87	5.66
Deutsche Mark	8.25	7.87	7.43	6.81
Swiss Franc	5.25	5.00	4.75	4.33
French Franc	10.25	9.66	9.00	8.25
Japanese Yen	3.12	3.12	3.18	3.31
European Currency Unit	9.35	9.18	8.56	7.95

Precious Metals

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	538.15	6.65	Silver	3.89	0.90

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6860	0.6880
Sterling Pound	1.0365	1.0317
Deutsche Mark	0.4280	0.4301
Swiss Franc	0.4623	0.4646
French Franc	0.1262	0.1266
Japanese Yen*	0.6006	0.6036
Dutch Guilder	0.3807	0.3826
Swedish Krona	0.0902	0.0907
Italian Lira*	0.0430	0.0438
Belgian Franc	0.02078	0.02088

Other Currencies

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7980	1.8420
Lebanese Lira*	0.038550	0.040475
Saudi Riyal	0.1826	0.1843
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.2450	2.2850
Qatari Riyal	0.1858	0.1882
Egyptian Pound	0.1950	0.2170
Omani Riyal	1.7560	1.7820
UAE Dirham	0.1856	0.1882
Greek Drachma*	0.3135	0.3335
Cypriot Pound	1.4135	1.4345

CAS Indices for Amman Financial Market*

Index	4/4/1993	Close	5/4/1993	Close
All-Share	195.54		195.10	
Banking Sector	135.06		134.66	
Insurance Sector	213.34		214.19	
Industry Sector	278.84		278.65	
Services Sector	265.23		260.53	

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs	4/4/1993	Close	5/4/1993	Close
Canadian dollar	1.2592/97			
Deutsche mark	1.6040/50			
Dutch guilder	1.8015/25			
Swiss franc	1.4817/27			
Belgian franc	33.02/06			
French franc	5.4425/75			
Italian lire	1591/1595			
Japanese yen	114.40/45			
Swedish crown	7.6300/6400			
Norwegian crown	6.8400/8500			
Danish crown	6.1700/1800			
One sterling	\$1.5160/70			
One ounce of gold	\$338.00/338.40			

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Gas pipeline to Armenia blown up for 5th time in Georgia

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Gas supplies to land-locked Armenia were cut off Tuesday after a pipeline was blown up in Georgia for the fifth time this year, RIA news agency said.

Armenia, which is desperately short of fuel, depends on Georgia for gas supplies. Alternative routes through Azerbaijan are closed because of a long-running conflict over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh.

RIA, quoting an Armenian presidential spokesman, said the explosion took place overnight. A government commission had been dispatched to assess the damage.

The pipeline was also blown up last month. There were two explosions in February and one in January.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attacks.

But the Marneulsi area, where all the explosions took place, has a large Azeri population. Armenian officials have blamed Azeris for the previous attacks because of the conflict between their peoples in Karabakh.

The Azeri government has denied any role.

Azerbaijan said Tuesday it repelled Armenian troops from the outskirts of the town of Fizuli, south of the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The fighting marked Azerbaijan's first claimed victory in almost a week of heavy combat around Nagorno-Karabakh, a region populated mainly by Christ-

ian Armenians but located inside predominantly Muslim Azerbaijan.

Armenia has denied its forces attacked the Fizuli area. Five years of fighting over the region, which seeks independence, has killed more than 3,000 people and left tens of thousands homeless in the bloodiest conflict in the former Soviet Union.

The U.N. Security Council scheduled a closed-door meeting Tuesday to discuss the fighting at the request of neighbouring Turkey, which has cultural and ethnic ties with Azerbaijan.

Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosian issued a statement blaming Turkey and Azerbaijan for the latest fighting.

Karabakh Armenian troops captured nearly 1,000 square kilometres of Azerbaijani territory in an offensive that began last weekend as warmer spring weather enveloped the Caucasus Mountains.

The captured land includes the Kelbajar region, a narrow, mountainous strip of Azerbaijan separating Nagorno-Karabakh from Armenia. That victory opened a second corridor between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Armenia seized a corridor through the town of Lachin last year and has used it to get troops and supplies into the enclave.

Azerbaijan said Monday that Armenian troops had launched an offensive in the Fizuli region, south of the enclave near Azerbaijan's border with Iran. It said

Armenians were firing artillery and rockets at the regional capital, also called Fizuli, from surrounding hills.

The Armenians were about two kilometres from Fizuli when Azerbaijani troops forced them to retreat to positions five to seven kilometres outside the town. Khikmet Gajizade, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Russia, told reporters Tuesday.

Armenian officials have denied attacking Fizuli, although they said Armenian forces captured hills in the district last week from which Azerbaijani troops had been shelling Nagorno-Karabakh.

"Armenia thwarting all peacekeeping efforts in a bid to seize as much territory as possible so as to talk to Azerbaijan from the position of strength," Mr. Gajizade said.

In Damascus, Syria, Armenian Foreign Minister Vahan Papasian denied his nation has any territorial ambitions in Azerbaijan.

He told a news conference Armenia would back whatever settlement the Azerbaijani government and the Armenian inhabitants of Nagorno-Karabakh reach. But added that Azerbaijan was not serious about settling the conflict.

On Monday, Turkey closed its airspace to all scheduled, charter and relief flights, and halted the overland delivery of wheat supplies from France to Armenia.

Turkish President Turgut Ozal threatened his country would "bare its teeth" against Armenia,

but stopped short of calling for Turkish military intervention.

Asked about the Turkish government's actions, Mr. Papasian said: "Turkey believes that the current dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh is an internal issue without taking into consideration that Azerbaijan is an independent republic that should adopt its political path and not be subservient to Turkey."

He also said that Armenia's regular army has never participated in any attacks against Azerbaijan, saying military operations were mounted by "the defence forces of Karabakh."

He said, "any solution that satisfies Karabakh's government will be acceptable to the Armenian government."

But, he added, "the Azerbaijan government does not seek a peaceful solution. It rather uses terrorism against Karabakh as well as Armenia."

In Geneva, peace talks sponsored by the United States, Russia and Turkey broke down because of the fighting. Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister, Teyfik Kazimov, said Monday there was no point in continuing and demanded Armenia withdraw from the newly captured territory as a condition for further talks.

Turkey asked the U.N. Security Council to condemn "the Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan" and demand that Armenia withdraw its forces and stop its military offensive.



Karabakh Armenian soldiers board their truck for an attack against Azeri forces (AFP photo).

Bosnian Muslims threaten talks boycott as Srebrenica convoy leaves

SARAJEVO (R) — A U.N. convoy headed for Srebrenica to evacuate refugees Tuesday but Muslims said they would boycott top level military talks with Croats and Serbs because of fighting around the besieged Muslim town.

The Bosnian Serb army waved the 18-truck convoy through after delaying it for an hour on the border between Serbia and Bosnia when it arrived from Belgrade.

U.N. aid officials said it would start the evacuation of 15,000 hungry and frightened refugees from Srebrenica which Serbs have blockaded since the civil war started a year ago.

But as fighting continued around it in defiance of a cease-fire agreed by the three warring sides, the Muslim-led Bosnian army said it would not go to talks organised by U.N. peacekeepers Tuesday with Croat and Serb military commanders.

Sarajevo Radio said the Bosnians sent a letter to the head of U.N. forces in former Yugoslavia saying they felt morally constrained from attending the talks at Sarajevo Airport because of Serb attacks on Srebrenica where thousands of Muslims are trapped.

Lieutenant Commander Barry Frew, the U.N. spokesman in Sarajevo, said however that no delegation had communicated a refusal to take part in the talks.

However General Philippe Morillon, commander of U.N. troops in Bosnia, said: "It is still not clear that all sides will show up. We'll wait for while."

He added: "The only agenda will be Srebrenica."

Gen. Morillon told Bosnian Muslim Commander General Ratko Mladic last month that the siege of Sarajevo was a crime against humanity.

U.N. sources say Tuesday's meeting would test the rivals' willingness to move towards implementing portions of a peace plan mediated by Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen which would divide Bosnia into 10 provinces along ethnic lines.

Amateur radio operators who contacted Srebrenica Monday from Sarajevo reported heavy fighting, some of it hand-to-hand, four to six kilometres to the south.

In Washington, Secretary of State Warren Christopher said in a television interview that the United States may soon ask its allies to lift an arms embargo on Bosnia if the Bosnian Serbs continue to reject the U.N. peace plan.

In Luxembourg, Lord Owen called for "relentless pressure" to force the Serbs to accept the plan but rejected Mr. Christopher's remarks. Britain and Denmark also gave them a frosty reception.

Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic said he would walk out of the Yugoslav peace conference if "new pressure" was put on his forces to accept a peace plan for Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"They will not succeed. The pressure is not going to work with us," Mr. Karadzic told British Broadcasting Corporation radio. "We are right, we are fighting for our rights."

U.N. forces in Cambodia put on alert

PHNOM PENH (R) — The military component of the U.N. peacekeeping operation here has been put on alert after Khmer Rouge guerrillas attacks that have left four peacekeepers dead and seven wounded, a U.N. spokesman said Tuesday.

"In light of the recent attacks on UNTAC (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia) personnel, all military units have been directed to increase vigilance and enhance security measures and procedures," spokesman Eric Falt said.

"A direction clarifying acts

which could be considered hostile is currently being produced for the information of the military component," he said.

The military component comprises a 15,000-strong force of infantry and support troops.

U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali arrives in Cambodia Wednesday for a two-day visit to inspect the massive peacekeeping operation at the start of the election campaign which many analysts fear will be bloody and violent.

The new orders, issued by the commander of military forces in

Cambodia, Lieutenant-General John Sanderson, follow a second attack against Bulgarian peacekeepers in which one soldier was seriously wounded and probably paralysed for life, he said.

In that attack a sentry post at Amalean in southern Kompong Speu province was sprayed with machine gun fire.

"As a result a Bulgarian soldier received several bullets in his abdomen," Mr. Falt said, adding the man was evacuated Tuesday morning to a Bangkok hospital for specialist surgery.

Hijacked Chinese airliner returns

PEKING (R) — A Chinese airliner hijacked to Taiwan Tuesday flew back to China's southern city of Guangzhou, Chinese aviation authorities said.

The China Southern Airlines Boeing 757 with 200 people on board was ordered to fly to Taiwan by two hijackers armed with pistols and carrying cyanide tablets.

Nationalist authorities refuelled the plane and told it to fly back to China via Hong Kong to avoid breaking their ban on direct air links between the island and mainland China.

But the plane apparently ignored the directive and flew directly to Guangzhou, formerly known as Canton, which is just a short hop across the Hong Kong border.

The hijackers had earlier surrendered to Taiwan police. They remained in custody and Taiwan officials have not yet responded to Peking's request to repatriate the men.

"The plane has arrived in

Guangzhou," said an official with the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC). He said it would eventually fly on to Peking.

The hijackers stormed into the cockpit of the plane on a domestic flight to Peking from the southern city of Shenzhen. They asked for political asylum after arriving at Taipei International Airport, where the plane stayed for six hours.

The 13 crew members and 185 passengers who returned to China, all Chinese except for two Poles and one Indonesian, were unharmed, Taiwanese police said.

They identified the hijackers as Huang Shuang, 28, a purchasing agent for China's Tang Shan Steel Factory, and Liu Baocai, 23, a businessman selling marine products.

"I grew to hate the Communists. The Communists make people's life miserable and have created great inequalities in wealth. The history of communism is a

history of tyranny," police quoted Mr. Huang as saying in a statement.

The hijackers, one dressed in a business suit and the other wearing a waistcoat, appeared tense as they were briefly shown to reporters.

"The motive for the hijacking was that they spat on the despotic rule of the Chinese Communists and wanted to seek freedom," Taiwan government spokesman Jason Hu said.

Police said the hijackers were ready to swallow the cyanide pills if the hijacking failed.

The CAAC earlier said it had asked Taiwanese authorities to return the hijackers.

Tseng Chi-Shui, director of Taiwan's Aviation Policy, told a news conference he could not say whether Taiwan would grant the hijackers asylum, charge them with air piracy or repatriate them to China.

If the hijackers are charged, they might be sentenced to death or life imprisonment, Mr. Tseng said.

Probes leave top Italian party reeling

ROME (R) — Italy's Christian Democratic Party, which had a stranglehold on power for 40 years, has been struck to its heart by the latest developments in a huge corruption scandal, commentators said Tuesday.

In the space of less than 10 hours Monday, Magistrates in Milan and Rome issued official corruption warnings to former Prime Ministers Giulio Andreotti and Arnaldo Forlani.

"The (magistrates') warnings strike at the heart of the old Christian Democratic Party" (DC), said the centre-right Il Giornale daily newspaper.

"The DC is trembling and tearing itself to pieces," wrote editorialist Stefano Folli in Milan's Corriere Della Sera.

The warning to Mr. Forlani appeared to mark the definitive end of the so-called CAF (Craxi-Andreotti-Forlani) triumvirate that governed Italy in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Former Socialist leader and Prime Minister Bettino Craxi is under investigation in 14 separate cases.

The warnings were particularly destabilising for Italy's largest party because it is in the throes of an internal revolt by younger members who want a clean break with the old guard represented by Mr. Andreotti, 74, and Mr. Forlani, 67.

"The effects (of the corruption scandal) have reached the very top, to the men who symbolise the old guard DC," said La Stampa of Turin.

N. Korea denounces IAEA resolution

TOKYO (Agencies) — North Korea Tuesday lashed out at an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) decision to refer a row over inspection of two suspected nuclear plants to the United States.

The 35-member IAEA passed a resolution on April 1 to refer last month's decision by North Korea to withdraw from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) to the United Nations, which can impose punitive economic sanctions.

"This is an open hostile act of the United States and its followers to isolate and stifle our republic at any cost," the North Korean foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Following the IAEA decision, the United States, Russia and Britain — guarantors of the NPT — urged Pyongyang to comply fully with the pact.

"The so-called 'nuclear problem' of ours is not a matter to be discussed in the U.N. arena but a problem that should be resolved through negotiation between the DPRK (North Korea) and the United States," the statement, carried on the state-run (North) Korean Central News Agency, said.

North Korea said it would pull out of the NPT after the IAEA set a March 31 deadline for the inspection of two sites suspected of housing nuclear arms development facilities.

North Korea rejected the inspection saying they were military facilities and had nothing to do with nuclear weapons. North Korea says it is not developing nuclear arms.

On March 9, three days before its pull-out from the NPT, Pyongyang went on a "semi-war" alert after it accused the United States of fuelling tension by staging

Team Spirit joint exercises with South Korea.

South Korean President Kim Young-Sam said Tuesday North Korea might resort to "acts of provocation" after alienating itself from the world.

Presiding over a cabinet meeting called to discuss the North's refusal to allow inspections of suspected nuclear sites, Mr. Kim urged intensified diplomatic efforts to persuade the North to stop defying the world's nuclear watchdog.

"The development of nuclear arms in the North must be stopped without fail," a presidential spokesman quoted Mr. Kim as telling the meeting.

"The North may resort out of desperation to acts of provocation after totally alienating itself from the world community by rejecting legitimate international demands for nuclear transparency," Mr. Kim said.

Muto replaces Watanabe as Japan foreign minister

TOKYO (R) — Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa named a veteran trade negotiator to replace ailing Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe, who resigned earlier Tuesday because of a failing health.

Kubun Muto, 66, a former farm and trade minister, told reporters he had accepted the position. He is to be formally appointed foreign minister Wednesday.

"It is a very tough time for Japan's diplomacy," Mr. Muto said on national television. "I would like to inherit the positive diplomacy of Mr. Watanabe."

Mr. Watanabe, 69, told Mr. Miyazawa he was stepping down as foreign and deputy prime minister because of his health. While Mr. Muto will fill the foreign minister portfolio, the deputy premiership will remain vacant, Mr. Miyazawa said.

Last year, Mr. Watanabe underwent gall bladder surgery and was recently commuting to parliament from hospital after becoming ill in February.

The English-language daily Yomiuri, sister publication of

Japan's biggest daily, recently reported Mr. Watanabe had cancer and urged Mr. Miyazawa to look for a replacement.

Mr. Muto's immediate task is to co-chair, together with Finance Minister Yoshiro Hayashi, next week's crucial meeting of the foreign and finance ministers of the Group of Seven (G-7) industrialised countries.

Ministers from the United States, Germany, Japan, France, Italy, Canada and Britain are scheduled to discuss aid to Russia, an issue expected to dominate the main Tokyo summit of G-7 leaders scheduled for July 7-9 in Tokyo.

Japan has come under fire for not doing enough to extend aid to Russia. Tokyo refuses to sign a World War II peace treaty with Moscow or offer it large-scale bilateral aid until the two countries resolve a decades-long territorial dispute.

Mr. Miyazawa first turned to former Finance Minister Tsutomu Hata, 57, as a candidate for foreign minister.

After rejecting the offer, Mr.



Michio Watanabe

Hata told reporters: "I decided I would rather work for political reform than join the cabinet."

Mr. Muto is a protégé of Mr. Watanabe and comes from the same faction within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

Bonn under strain over Bosnia policy

BONN (R) — Tensions within Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government burst into the open Tuesday as his junior partners debated whether to quit the coalition over Germany's policy on Bosnia. Justice Minister Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger said her Free Democrats (FDP) should consider leaving the 10-year coalition if the Supreme Court refused to rule on a bizarre suit pitting them against Mr. Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU). But other leading figures in the small Liberal Party said walking out would neither help the beleaguered Bosnians nor bring Germany any closer to the new international role it has been struggling to define since unification in 1990.

Angola rebels accept talks proposal

LISBON (AP) — UNITA rebels have accepted a U.S. proposal to resume peace talks with the Angolan government next week in Ivory Coast, news reports said Tuesday. In a letter delivered Monday to the United Nations in New York, UNITA representative Marcus Samondo said rebel leaders approved the location and spirit of the U.S. offer, Portuguese TSF Radio reported. The talks are scheduled to begin on April 12 in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, TSF said.

Buthelezi: Elections possible this year

LONDON (R) — Multi-racial elections in South Africa are possible within the year, chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, president of the black-led Inkatha Freedom Party, said Tuesday. Mr. Buthelezi, chief of the Zulu nation, told British Broadcasting Television that elections could take place by September and he was hopeful for the future of South Africa. "I think that all of us would like to have elections by next year and I expect that by September, as far as I can estimate, we will have elections," he said. "I am hopeful because the multi-party talks have started. That's the only reason why I say it is possible that one estimates that probably by September we will have elections," he added.

All survive in Guatemala plane crash

GUATEMALA CITY (R) — A Boeing 767 airliner overran the runway and crashed into some houses as it landed in Guatemala

City Monday, but no one was killed, officials said. The director general of civil aviation, Colonel Fernando Castillo, said all 213 passengers and nine crew members on board the flight from San Salvador to Guatemala survived, although several were injured. Fire Department officer Armando Martinez said at least 11 passengers and two or three people injured on the ground had been taken to hospital. The plane, owned by the Salvadoran airline Taca, was to go on to Los Angeles. The aircraft, landing at Guatemala's La Aurora Airport in wet conditions, overran the runway and crashed into houses in the poor La Libertad neighbourhood some 150 metres from the south end of the runway.

Shuttle launch aborted for 2nd time

CAPE CANAVERAL (R) — The launch of shuttle Discovery, on a mission to study the Earth's thinning ozone layer, was halted just 11 seconds before blastoff early Tuesday. It was the second aborted launch in two weeks for the shuttle programme. The previous one, involving the shuttle Columbia, was halted three seconds from liftoff on March 22. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) said there was an apparent problem with a pressure valve in the shuttle's propulsion system. It indicated it would be a few days before a second launch attempt could be made.

Tajiks seize 10 Russian border guards

MOSCOW (R) — Ten Russian Border Guards have been kidnapped by armed men on the frontier between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, a military spokesman in Moscow said Tuesday. Russian Border Guards spokesman Yevgeny Znamensky said the servicemen were seized Monday. He said measures were being taken to find out where they were being held and to free them, but gave no details. "We believe they are still alive," he said. Mr. Znamensky said the attackers had not contacted Russian troops to set conditions for the release of the servicemen. The former Soviet border troops, now under Russian control, have been caught up in the bloody ethnic and clan conflict in the Central Asian state, which borders Iran, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan as well as Afghanistan. Thousands of Tajiks have fled into Afghanistan to escape the fighting, in which hundreds have been killed,

COLUMN

Justices dismiss murder case because suspect was murdered

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court has dismissed a murder case that might have yielded an important ruling on police conduct in questioning criminal suspects. The murder suspect had been murdered in the national capital. At issue in the case argued before the justices in November were the rules that limit police in questioning criminal suspects when they invoke their right not to talk without their lawyers present. Lower courts had ruled that Lower Green's confession of his involvement in the 1988 murder of Cheever Herriott could not be used as evidence against him. But last week the court was told by Justice Department lawyers that Mr. Green "was shot and killed on March 24, in the District of Columbia." (Washington). On Monday the court dismissed the case.

Pope legitimises Caroline's children

VATICAN CITY (AP) — The Vatican said Pope John Paul II has ruled Princess Caroline's three children legitimate, opening the way to her sons' possible succession to the throne of the tiny Catholic principality of Monaco. The children, two boys and a girl, were born of Princess Caroline's seven-year civil marriage to Stefano Casiraghi, an Italian who was killed in a speedboat accident in 1990. Princess Caroline married Mr. Casiraghi in 1983, a year after her divorce from Philippe Junot, a French playboy. That first marriage was annulled last year by the Vatican, and left her free to marry in the Catholic Church if she likes. The Vatican, in a brief statement, said the Pope signed the decree legitimising the children on Feb. 23. It was confirming news reports that a Vatican commission had ruled in favour of the legitimisation. First in line for the principality's throne is Princess Caroline's younger brother, Albert.

One False Move wins top film awards

COGNAC, France (AP) — One False Move, a film directed by American Carl Franklin, has won the Grand Prize and Critic's Prize at the 11th Detective Film Festival. The special prize went to Jennifer Elliot, directed by Bruce Robinson, and Giancarlo Soldi's Nero, or Black, received a special distinguished mention at the festival's conclusion. The jury included directors Arthur Penn (Bonnie and Clyde and Georgia), who presided, and Stephen Frears (Accidental Hero), as well as actors Stacy Keach, Donald Plesance and Vittorio Mezzogiorno.

Japan banker botches burglary

TOKYO (R) — A Japanese bank manager turned burglar set off the alarm system when he attempted to rob a branch of his own bank, police said Tuesday. They arrested Toshikuni Mikuni, 37, a deputy branch manager of the Hokuyo Bank in Hokkaido, northern Japan, after he broke into the bank's Sapporo branch. Mr. Mikuni had just been appointed deputy head of the bank's Hamamotobetsu Branch in remote northern Hokkaido. Police said they were puzzled because Mr. Mikuni was not even aware that he had set off alarms after his break-in, something any veteran bank employee would be expected to know. Mr. Mikuni told police he had attempted to rob the branch safe.

Robert De Niro wins child support court battle

LOS ANGELES (R) — Oscar-winning actor Robert De Niro does not have to pay child support for a 10-year-old girl said to have believed he was her father, a court ruled. De Niro, who won his Oscar in 1980 for his role as boxer Jake La Motta in the movie Raging Bull, had been paying 2,500 a month since last September under a court order for the child's support. But Commissioner James Endman, sitting in Los Angeles Superior Court, ruled that De Niro, who in three separate blood tests proved he was not the girl's biological father, no longer had to continue payment. The girl's mother, Helena Lindred, a nightclub singer who met De Niro at a Hollywood party in 1979 and began a three-year relationship with him, had sued the actor for 8,000 a month in child support and 100,000 in lawyer's fees.